Soviet Literature

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Soviet Literature

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STALIN PRIZE WINNERS FOR LITERATURE IN 1943—1944

A recently published decision of the Soviet Government announced the Stalin Prize winners for outstanding works of art and literature created during 1943—1944. As a rule, Stalin prizes are awarded annually, but this time the awards covered a two years' period.

Among the prize winners are musicians, painters, sculptors, architects, writers, artists, directors of the theatre and cinema. Sixteen writers and poets are among the prize winners; the most of their works were written during the war and it is not surprising therefore that martial and patriotic themes dominate.

Two first-class prizes of 100,000 roubles each, were awarded for the best works of fiction. One of these is the historical novel *Emelyan Pugachev*, the prize for which was a posthumous award to the author Vyacheslav Shishkov who died last year. This novel is a historical canvas depicting Russian life during the 18th century. The plot centres around the popular revolt led by Emelyan Pugachev against the autocracy. The book has the grandeur of an epic and is written in a rich, sonorous style.

Alexander Stepanov, author of the historical novel *Port-Arthur*, qualified for the second of the first-class awards. Stepanov, himself in his childhood an eyewitness of the siege of Port-Arthur, gives a masterly portrayal of the battles. The author stresses the point that the fall of Port-Arthur was a defeat for the Russian monarchy but not of the Russian people who displayed outstanding valour and heroism in the struggle against the Japanese. Like *Emelyan Pugachev* Stepanov's novel is in the nature of an epic and is a convincing combination of the memoirs of an eyewitness and the vivid, artistic description of the novelist. Incidentally, *Port-Arthur* is Stepanov's first novel.

Four second-class awards of 50,000 roubles each went to authors portraying modern life. First amongst these is Boris Gorbatov's *The Unconquered* which is a moving pen-picture of the horrors of German occupation and the heroic struggle waged by Soviet people against the hated invader. The action centres around a working class family in the town of Voroshilovgrad, and Gorbatov is eminently successful in his portrayal of the old worker Taras who combines in his person the best qualities of the Soviet people.

The *Two Captains* by Venyamin Kaverin is a story of thrilling adventure and romance. Its theme is the moulding under Soviet conditions of a young man's character. Intended for young people, the *Two Captains* is immensely popular with young and adult readers alike.

Wanda Wasilewska, who in 1942 won a Stalin Prize for her novel *The Rainbow*—a portrayal of life in a Russian village under German occupation—is again amongst the prize winners. Her latest novel *Just Love* fathoms the nobility of a soul of a Soviet woman who retains her love for her soldier husband even after he had been hideously disfigured at the front. This is a book about deep and moving emotions, treating as it does a moral problem very acute and real to many who have suffered in this war.

For the second time also Constantin Simonov figures among the Stalin Prize winners. In 1942 this honour was conferred on him for his play *Russian People* which is well known in Britain and America. This time Simonov won the prize with his *Days and Nights*, [2] dedicated to the heroic epic of Stalingrad.

Of the eight poets among the prize winners four—Kuleshov, Tvardovsky, Surkov and Lozinsky—qualified for first-class prizes.

The patriotic sentiments of Soviet citizens battling against the German invaders, are vividly portrayed by the Belorussian poet Arkadi Kuleshov in *The Banner of the Brigade*, a poem which describes a partisan detachment fighting their way out of encirclement and preserving the banner of the brigade as the symbol which will lead them to victory. This is a lyrical epic poem written in delightful verse.

Alexander Tvardovsky received award for the poem *Vassili Terkin*, the hero of which is a hearty and brave soldier who retains his good humour and gay spirits even under the most trying conditions of war. The style and content of this poem are of a profoundly national, popular nature.

Alexei Surkov is the author of *Song of the Brave, The Soldier's Mother, The Home Fire Burns Brightly, Song of the Defender*

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[1] See the magazine *International Literature*, No. 1, 1945.

[2] See the magazine *International Literature* No. 4, 1944.

Moscow. Victory and *The Death Agony.* rkov's songs, written during the grim r years, enjoyed immense popularity. d Army men sang them in the trenches d as they marched into battle.

The fourth of the first-class prizes was arded Mikhail Lozinsky, poet and trans-tor, for his brilliant translation of Dante's *ivine Comedy.*

Second-class prizes were awarded to the ets Antokolsky, Gulyam, Pervomaisky and okofyev.

In the poem *The Son* Pavel Antokolsky scribes the death of his son, killed in action, d the grief of the father. The moving sin-rity and profound depths of this sorrow, asterfully depicted, the full, vigorous ythm and the sculptured figures of the aracters, make this a truly great poem.

In the volume of verse published under e title *I Come From the East,* the Uzbek et Gafur Gulyam sings the life of his people d their progress under Soviet rule. Gulyam s introduced a new style into the ancient rms of Uzbek verse, a new rhythm not like that of the modern Russian poets, particular Mayakovsky.

Leonid Pervomaisky, Ukrainian poet, ntered the ranks of Stalin Prize winners ith his collections of verse *The Birthday* nd *The Land.* In both of these he de-cribes with lyricism the sufferings of the Uk-inian people during the German occupation.

Alexander Prokofyev, a native of Lenin-rad, lived and fought in his native city roughout the siege. The passionate patriot-m with which his verse is imbued was source of encouragement and inspired the heroic defenders of the besieged city. Prokofyev's poems *Russia, No Surrender, The Vow, The Drinking Song* and *For you, Leningrad!* won wide popularity with the soldiers on all sectors of the Leningrad front. Prokofyev is a creator of interesting poetical landscapes and possesses a remarkable ability for drawing clear-cut pen-portraits of his characters. His poetry is permeated with deep and sincere emotion which involuntarily carries the reader away with it.

Of the two prizes awarded to playwrights, a first-class prize was a posthumous award to the late Alexei Tolstoy for his "dramatic novel" *Ivan Grozny.* In this novel the personality of the famous Russian tsar stands out in all its majesty as one of the founders of Russia's greatness. The tense drama of the situations in the play is combined with an epic portrayal of the various classes of Russian society in the 16th century. As always, the language of Tolstoy's characters is colourful and eloquent.

The second prize was presented to the well-known poet and translator Samuel Marshak for his dramatic fairy-tale *Twelve Months.* The play, based on a theme from Slavic folklore, is treated with great poetic skill by Marshak. The age-old moving story of the wicked step-mother and the unfortunate step-daughter has served Marshak as a basis for a work in which the wisdom of nature is symbolically portrayed: nature helps the good and keeps her wonders and riches hidden from the wicked.

The Government's announcement of the Stalin Prize awards was hailed by the Soviet people with great satisfaction.

ALEXANDER FADEYEV

THE YOUNG GUARD

(Continued)

One of the slender figures silhouetted against the night glanced up at the arch and said softly:

"This is the place. . . ."

A small, thin boy, using his sharp, agile elbows and knees, made his way up to the top of the arch. Here he busied himself for some time in the exact centre. Suddenly Fomin saw a thick noose of rope dangling high above him against the dim, diffused light of the sky.

"Fasten it with a double sailor knot," said an older boy who was standing below, the black peak of his cap pointing upwards.

Fomin heard the voice and suddenly thought of his room in "Shanghai" and the tubs with their growing plants, a thick-set freckle-faced figure sitting at the table, and this boy. And Ignat Fomin began to writhe terribly on the cold, wet ground, contorting the whole of his long, worm-like body. He twisted and wriggled from the place where he had been laid, but a squat figure wearing a huge jacket, like a sailor blouse, with tremendously broad shoulders and powerful hands, heaved him back to his former place with a push of his foot.

In this figure Fomin recognized Kovalyov, who had served together with him in the police and been dismissed. In addition to Kovalyov, he recognized one of the drivers employed at the administration office, a similarly broad-shouldered fellow, whom only that day he had seen in the garage whither he had run for a quick smoke before going on duty. And with a strange momentary forgetfulness of his position, the thought flashed through Fomin's mind that this driver was probably the main source of those numerous and inexplicable accidents to the administration cars about which the Germans had been complaining, and that he had better report it. But in the same instant he heard a voice above him saying quietly and solemnly, with a slight Armenian accent:

"In the name of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. . . ."

For a second Fomin was quiet, he raised his eyes to the sky and once more saw above him the thick noose against the diffused light of the sky and the thin boy sitting quietly on the arch over the gate, gripping it with his legs and looking down. The voice with the Armenian accent was silent. And Fomin was gripped by such deadly terror that he again began writhing desperately. Several strong hands gripped him and raised him to his feet, the thin boy on the crossbeam tore off the towel binding his jaw, and slipped the noose over his neck.

Fomin tried to tear the gag from his mouth, jerked convulsively in the air, and then hung, his toes just above the ground, in his long black coat buttoned to the throat. Ivan Turkenich turned him about to face Sadovaya Street and with a safety-pin fastened to th chest of the hanging figure a notice, statin the crime for which Ignat Fomin had bee executed.

Then they dispersed, each going his ow way, except for little Radik Yurkin, who wer to spend the night with Zhora at the settl ment.

Radik was shivering.

"How do you feel?" Zhora asked him in terrible whisper, his black eyes flashing i the darkness.

"I'm terribly sleepy, just can't keep m eyes open . . . I'm used to turning in early said Radik, looking at Zhora with his caln gentle eyes.

Seryozha Tyulenin was standing though fully under the trees in the park. At last th deed was done—the deed he had sworn to c on the day he had learned that the tall, kind man whom he had seen at Fomin's hou had been betrayed by his host to tl Germans. Seryozha had not only insisted c the sentence being carried out. He himse had devoted to it all his physical and mor strength, and now it was done. . . . His fee ings were mingled—a sense of satisfactic and the excitement of success, and a last, b lated spurt of revenge, and a terrible wear ness, a longing for a good wash in hot wate and an unusual thirst for pleasant, friend conversation about something quite, qui far-off and different, something simple ar bright like the rustle of leaves, the gurgle of stream or sunl ght on weary, closed eyes. . .

Best of all just then would have bee Valya's company, but he felt he could not g to her so late, especially with her mother ar little sister there. And in any case, Valya w not in town; for the past two days she ha been in the village of Krasnodon[1]. . . ."

And so it came about that on this strange dim night, with its cold, icy drizzle, Seryozh Tyulenin, shivering in his soaked shirt, h bare feet blue with cold and dirt, tapped a Vanya Zemnukhov's window.

They sat there in the lamp-lit kitche with the blinds drawn. The fire crackled, large kettle stood on the stove—Vanya ha decided to treat his friend to a hot wash—ar Seryozha, his bare feet tucked under hir hugged the stove. Gusts of wind lashed tl fine rain against the window panes; and tl monotonous pattering and the roar of the ga which even here, in the kitchen, flicker the flame of the lamp, made the friends fe how miserable it would be for a lonely tra

[1] A mining settlement bearing the san name as the town, some little distance awa

er on the steppe, and how good it was to together there in the warm kitchen. Vanya, barefoot, his glasses perched on his se, spoke in his deep bass.

"I can just picture him[1] in that little cot-ge, the wind roaring all round, and only old nurse, Arina Rodionovna with him. . . . e gale howling, and the nurse sitting by her inning-wheel . . . the droning of the wheel d the crackling of the log-fire. . . . I can agine what it was like, I'm from the coun- myself, and my mother, you know, was an iterate country-woman just like yours. . . . an remember our cottage now, I would be ing on the stove, six years old I was, and my other Sasha had come back from school d was learning poetry. . . . And then I nember him herding sheep, and I straddled ram and began banging him with my bast oes, and he threw me off. . . ." With a pang self-consciousness, Vanya suddenly stop-d for a moment, then began talking again. Of course, it was a grand thing when his ends came to see him . . . I can just see shchin[2] driving up, for instance. He'd hear e bells. 'Who's that?' he'd think. 'Not the ndarmes coming?' And then it would be shchin, his friend. . . . And they'd sit ere in the room with the old nurse, far away a snow-bound village, without lights, in ose days they used to burn torches or spills... you remember:

rm-clouds dim the sky, the tempest eaves the snow in patterns wild;
ke a beast the gale is howling,
d now wailing like a child. . . .

course, you do. I always liked that pas-ge . . ."

And standing up for some reason, Vanya re-ed in his deep voice:

Let us drink, dear old companion,
ou who shared my sorry start;
tch the glass and drown our sorrows;
at's the way to cheer the heart.
ng the ballad of the titmouse
ho beyond the seas was gone,
r the song about the maiden
rawing water just at dawn. . . ."

Seryozha sat there quietly, huddled close the stove, pursing his full lips. His eyes, ued on Vanya, had a stern yet tender look. ne lid of the kettle began to dance, while the ater bubbled and hissed merrily.

"That's enough poetry! . ." Vanya seemed ddenly to wake up. "Come on, strip: I'll ve you a good scrubbing!" he continued mer-y. "No, get them all off, everything. What's ere to be bashful about? I've brought a fah, too."

While Seryozha was undressing, Vanya re-ved the kettle, withdrew a large basin m under the stove, set it on a stool, and ced a piece of coarse, evil-smelling laundry p in the corner.

"In the village, where I lived, in the Tam-v country—now the Moscow region—there was an old man, who'd worked all his life as bath attendant in Moscow for the merchant Sandunov," said Vanya sitting astride the stool, his long bare legs dangling. "You know what that means to be a bath attend-ant? Say, you come to the baths. Maybe you're a fine gentleman, or just simply too lazy to wash yourself, you engage the attend-ant, and he rubs you down good and hard, the whiskered old devil—see? Well, this old chap used to say that in his time he'd washed no less than a million and a half men. And would you believe it, he was proud of it—that he'd made so many people clean! And after all, you know, it's human nature to be dirty again a week later!"

Laughing, Seryozha threw off the last of his clothes, poured more hot water into the basin until the temperature suited him and with the keenest enjoyment plunged his curly head into it.

"Your wardrobe's a wonder," said Vanya, hanging the damp garments over the stove. "Worse than mine. . . . Oh, I see you know the game. . . . Pour the dirty water out there into the bucket and get some more, don't worry about splashing the floor, I'll wipe it. . . ." Suddenly Vanya assumed a dull yet submissive smile, stooped still more, letting his narrow hands hang helplessly, as though they had suddenly become too heavy for him, and said, in a still deeper voice: "Turn around, Your Honour, while I scrub your back. . . ."

Seryozha soaped the loofah in silence, glanced at his friend out of the tail of his eye and snorted. He handed Vanya the loofah and sup-ported himself with his hands on the stool, presenting to Vanya his sunburned, lean but muscular back with the projecting ribs.

Fumblingly, unable to see properly through his steamed glasses, Vanya began to rub that back, while Seryozha grumbled in a very lordly tone:

"What's come over you, my friend? Lost your strength? Or just feeling lazy? I can't say that I'm satisfied with your work. . . ."

"And what sort of grub do I get? What can you expect, Your Honour?" Vanya replied with the utmost gravity, in a very humble and apologetic bass.

At that moment the kitchen door opened; Vanya, in his horn-rimmed glasses with his sleeves rolled to the elbow, and Seryozha, his back covered with soap, turned to see Vanya's father standing at the door in his underwear. Tall and thin he stood there, his heavy arms hanging listlessly, with the same look that Vanya had just been imitating, and stared at the boys, his eyes gleaming whitely. For some time he remained motionless and silent, then turned and went out, closing the door behind him. They could hear him shuffling along the passage into the other room.

"The storm's passed," said Vanya calmly. But now he continued to rub Seryozha's back without any of his previous zest. "You'll be kind to me, Your Honour?"

"God will reward you," replied Seryozha, not quite certain if that was what one did say to a bath attendant, and sighed.

"Yes. . . I don't know how things are with you, but we're going to have some trouble with our old men and our mothers," said

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The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin was led by tsar Nicholas I to his estate of Khailovskoye.

Pushkin's friend of college days.

Vanya seriously, when Seryozha, clean and glowing, his hair combed, was once more sitting at the little table by the stove.

But Seryozha had no fear of difficulties with his parents. He glanced at Vanya absent-mindedly.

"Can you let me have a bit of paper and pencil? Before I go. I've got to write something," he said.

And this is what he wrote, while short-sighted Vanya made a pretence of tidying up the kitchen.

"Valya, I never thought I'd feel so bad about you going alone. I keep thinking of you all the time. Don't let's ever part again, let's do everything together. Valya, if I perish, I ask one thing only—come to my grave and always think kindly of me."

In his bare feet Seryozha again traversed the tortuous path of the "Shanghai-ites" along gulleys and hollows accompanied by the howling wind and icy drizzle—again through the park, then on to Derevyanny Street, in order to hand the letter to Valya's little sister Lucy, no later than dawn.

Thoughts about her mother took the delight out of that early morning for Valya, as she walked over the steppe with Natalya Alexeyevna, moving with brisk, businesslike steps along the shining damp path.

The first independent assignment, and one fraught with a certain risk, but what about mother?... What a look she gave her daughter when Valya mentioned that she was going away for a few days to stay with Natalya Alexeyevna! What a chill must have filled her mother's heart at her daughter's callousness—especially now, when there was no father, when mother was so lonely! . . . But suppose mother already suspected something?

"Tossya Yeliseyenko, to whom I shall introduce you, is a teacher; she's my mother's neighbour, or rather, Tossya and her mother live together with my mother. She's a strong-willed, independent girl, much older than you are, and to be frank, I know she'll be somewhat taken aback at my bringing a pretty girl with me instead of a bearded underground worker," said Natalya Alexeyevna, very careful as usual about the exact choice of words and not in the least interested in the impression they made on her listener. "I regard Seryozha as a sensible boy, and in some things I'll trust his judgement sooner than my own. And when Seryozha tells me that you're from the district organization, then that's good enough for me. I want to help you. If Tossya isn't sufficiently frank with you, then try Kolya Sumskoy—judging by Tossya's attitude to him I'm convinced that Kolya is their leading spirit. It's true, they pretend to Tossya's mother and to mine that there's some sort of sentimental attachment, but although I myself have always been too busy to bother about any personal life, I understand these young people and their affairs very well. I know that Kolya Sumskoy is in love with Lida Androsova, a coquettish sort of girl," Natalya Alexeyevna added with disapproval, "but also undoubtedly a member of their organization," she added, in pure fairness. "If you want Kolya Sumskoy to get in touch personally with the district organization, I, as doctor at the district labour exchange, can give him two day's sick leave. . . . He works in some pit or other there. . . . "

"And will the Germans accept your certificate?" asked Valya.

"The Germans!" cried Natalya Alexeyevna. "They'll not only accept it, they'll obey any paper from any official. . . . The pit administration is made up of our own people, Russians. It's true that alongside the manager, just as everywhere, there's a German from the technical corps, a foul cur, like them all. To them, we Russians are so much alike, that they never know who's come to work and who hasn't. It's easy to trick them. . . ."

Things passed out as Natalya Alexeyevna indicated.

Valya had to spend two days in this sprawling, uninviting settlement with its dead, frozen pitheads, without a trace of green anywhere, among people whom it was difficult to convince that long eyelashes and golden braids could go together with the tremendous prestige of the Young Guard

Natalya Alexeyevna's mother lived in the older part of the settlement, composed of several hamlets that had merged. There the cottages even had their own small gardens, but these had all dried up. The streets were knee deep in mud and would evidently remain so until the winter frosts.

At this time the settlement saw a steady stream of Rumanian troops moving towards Stalingrad. For hours at a time their guns and army carts drawn by thin horses struggling in their traces, would stand there stuck fast in the mud, while the drivers cursed through the whole settlement in a grinding monotone.

Tossya Yeliseyenko, a pretty black-eyed girl of twenty-three, with a plump Ukrainian figure, hot-headed and passionate to the point of obstinacy, told Valya to her face that she blamed the district underground centre for failing to attach proper importance to a mining settlement like Krasnodon. Why hadn't a single one of the leaders visited them until now? Why hadn't they sent a responsible member in answer to their request, someone who could have taught them how to work?

Valya felt she had the right to say that the adult underground members in the town had been arrested, and that she represented the Young Guard, the youth organization, which was working under the leadership of the regional underground centre in Voroshilovgrad.

"And why didn't someone from the Young Guard headquarters come?" said Tossya, her black eyes flashing. "We have our own youth organization," she added proudly.

"I was sent here as the representative of headquarters," Valya replied, with an equally proud twist to her bright lips. "And to send a member of the staff to an organization which so far hasn't displayed any activity would be incorrect, and contrary to all the rules of conspiracy . . . if you have the faintest understanding of such things," Valya added icily. The home thrust told.

"Not displayed any activity!" cried Tossya furiously. "A fine staff, that doesn't know anything about the work of its own organization! But I'm no fool to talk about our activity to a person we don't know! . . ."

t is more than possible that they might er have come to an understanding, these pretty girls, each with a sufficient sense ıer own value, if Kolya Sumskoy, with his rthy, large-nosed and sagacious face, his ing and cleverness, coming from his Cossack ɔears, combined with resolution, had not en a hand in the matter.

Tue, when Valya mentioned his name sya pretended not to know him. But Valya lared bluntly and coldly that the Young ard were aware of his leading role in the anization, and if Tossya refused to lead to him, then she would find him for her-f.

'And how will you set about finding him?" ed Tossya, with a certain amount of alarm.

'Well, maybe through Lida Androsova. . ."

'Lida Androsova has no reason to regard ı differently than I do!"

'All the worse. . . I shall look for him self, and not knowing his address, may idently make trouble for him. . . ."

Tossya surrendered.

Things took on a different hue when they ınd themselves with Kolya Sumskoy. Kolya ed on the very outskirts of the settlement a wooden house, just on the fringe of the ppe. At one time his father had been a ter at the pit, and they lived a semi-rural e.

Frowning the while, Sumskoy listened to somewhat haughty explanations given by lya and Tossya's passionate tone, and then ntly invited both girls outside the cottage. ey followed him up a ladder to the attic. A ck of pigeons flew out with a great flut-ing, some of them perching on Sumskoy's ıd and shoulders, and trying to alight on hands, until at last he held out one hand a dazzlingly white bird, which sat there tionless, as though it had been turned out a mould.

A youth with the build of a Hercules who s sitting in the attic appeared thoroughly ken aback when he saw a stranger. He stily covered something beside him with straw lying about, but Sumskoy gave him a n that everything was all right. With a ile the Hercules threw the straw aside in, and Valya saw a wireless set.

'Volodya Zhdanov. . . Valya Incognito, suppose," said Sumskoy without a smile. ere we are, the three of us—Tossya, Volo-ı and my humble self—the leading trio our organization," he said, as the cooing eons clustered round him.

While they were discussing whether Sumskoy uld accompany Valya to the town, Valya ld feel the Hercules' eyes upon her. It le her uncomfortable. This lad's face and ure were of the noblest proportions, his k seemed to be cast from bronze, and his ole being radiated a calm, lovely strength. some reason Valya suddenly thought of efoot Seryozha, and such a tender, happy g pierced her heart that she fell silent.

All four of them went to the side of the c, and suddenly Kolya Sumskoy seized the eon perched on his hand, and with a free up-d and outward swing, hurled it with all his ngth out through the skylight into the p, drizzling sky. The other birds left shoulders, and followed their leader out over the roof tops. But the white feathered pigeon, wings beating, had disappeared into the heavens.

Tossya Yeliseyenko, throwing out her arms, sat down and burst into a hearty laugh. She sounded so merry and happy that everybody looked at her and smiled. The happiness in her eyes and voice seemed to be saying to them: "You think I'm tough, but just take a good look and see what a bonny lass I am!"

Morning found Valya and Kolya Sumskoy on the steppe, on the way to the town. The mist had lifted during the night, and ever since dawn the sun had been so warm that the ground had already dried up. The steppe extended on every hand, misty with barely perceptible blades of grass, lovely in the golden rays of the morning sun, the colour of molten copper. Fine long spider-webs drifted through the transparent air. Suddenly the roar of German transport planes resounded over the steppe. All of them flying in the same direction to Stalingrad, to Stalingrad. . . And then, again everything was silent.

When they had travelled half way, Valya and Sumskoy sat down on the hillside to rest in the warm sunshine. Sumskoy lighted a cigarette.

Suddenly they heard a song ringing out over the steppe, a song so familiar that the melody echoed in the hearts of Valya and Sumskoy. . . *The Dark Hills Sleep*. . . . For the people of the Donets steppe, this song was near and dear, but how did it come to sound here, at this early hour of the morning?. . . Raising themselves on their elbows, they silently echoed the words of the song as it came nearer. There were two voices, male and female, very young voices, singing with a challenging loudness, as though defying the whole world.

Valya crept up to the top of the slope, glanced stealthily over, then rising to her feet laughed out loud.

Hand in hand, Volodya Osmukhin and his sister Ludmila were coming along the road towards them, singing at the top of their voices, yelling, in fact.

Valya jumped up from the hillside and at top speed, as though she were a child again, raced down the slope to meet them. Sumskoy, not particularly surprised, followed her at a more sedate pace.

"Where are you going?"

"To Granddad in the village, to get some food. . . Who's that strolling down here after you?"

"That's one of our own, Kolya Sumskoy from the settlement."

"I can recommend another sympathizer, my own sister Lucia—right now on the steppe we came to an understanding," said Volodya.

"Well, what do you think, Valya—isn't it a mean trick? After all, everyone knows me, but my own brother keeps everything from me, and I can see it all going on, for that matter, I even fell over his type from the printshop and some sort of stinking mixture that he was cleaning it with, and he's got it part cleaned and part still to do, when suddenly today . . . Valya! Do you know what's happened today?" Lucia cried sud-

denly, with a swift glance at Sumskoy, who was approaching.

"Wait a bit," said Volodya seriously. "Our fellows from the machine shop saw it themselves, they told me all about it. . . . It was like this—they were walking alongside the park, and suddenly saw someone in a black overcoat hanging over the gate, with a placard pinned to his chest. At first they thought the Germans had hanged one of our people. They went nearer and saw—Fomin. You know him, that bastard from the Polizei? The placard said: 'This is what we shall do to all traitors to our people.' That was all. . . You understand?" Volodya added, lowering his voice to a whisper. "That's a good job done! He was hanging there for two hours in broad daylight. It was his own post, you see, and there were none of the Polizei anywhere near! Crowds of people saw the body, they're talking of nothing else in town today."

Volodya and Valya not only knew nothing about the decision taken by the staff to execute Fomin, they could not even conceive of such a possibility, and Volodya was convinced that it had been carried out by the underground Bolshevik organization. But Valya suddenly paled, so that her pallor was visible even through the golden sunburn.

"You don't know by any chance whether everything went all right as far as our people were concerned—there were no casualties?" she asked, hardly able to control the trembling of her lips.

"Brilliantly!" cried Volodya. "Nobody knows a thing about it, and everything's gone fine. But I've got a pretty kettle of fish stewing at home. . . . Mum's dead sure that it was I who hanged that son-of-a-bitch and has started prophesying that I'll be hanged too. So I gave Ludmila the hint, said to her, 'You see, Mum's got a temperature, and in general, it's time to be going along to Granddad . . .' "

"Kolya, let's get going," said Valya suddenly to Sumskoy.

All the rest of the way to the town Valya almost drove her companion on. Sumskoy was at a loss to explain the change in her.

Now her heels were tapping up her own stairway. Sumskoy followed her shyly into the dining room.

Maria Andreyevna, in a dark dress closely fitting her full figure, and pale little Lucy, her light hair hanging to her shoulders, were sitting opposite each other in the dining room in glum silence as though at a solemn celebration. As Maria Andreyevna saw her older daughter, she rose quickly and tried to say something, but couldn't; she rushed to Valya, glanced at her and then at Sumskoy suspiciously for an instant, and then hugged her daughter frantically. It was just then that Valya realized that her mother had been undergoing the same tormenting anxiety as Volodya's mother had—she had suspected that her daughter, Valya Borts, had taken part in Fomin's execution and consequently had gone away for several days.

Forgetting all about Sumskoy, who was standing at the door feeling rather uncomfortable, Valya looked at her mother as though to say: "Well, what am I going to say to you, Mummie?"

At that moment little Lucy came silently up to Valya and handed her a note. She opened it mechanically and recognized the writing even before she had time to begin reading it. A happy smile spread over her sunburned face covered with the dust from the road. She glanced swiftly at Sumskoy, the colour suffused her face, even spreading to her neck and ears. Valya seized her mother by the hand and dragged her into the adjoining room.

"Mummie!" she said. "Mummie! It's all nonsense, what you're thinking. But can't you really see, can't you understand what we live for, my comrades and I, can't you see that we can't live any other way, Mummie!" cried Valya as rosy and happy, she looked her mother straight in the face.

Maria Andreyevna's healthy face paled, even looked inspired.

"God bless you, my child!" said Maria Andreyevna. "God bless you!" she repeated, and burst into tears.

It is not easy for parents when, all ignorant of the world of thought and feeling in which their children move, they see these children drawn into secret mysterious activities, and are unable either to penetrate into this world or to forbid it.

Already at breakfast, Vanya could see by his father's lowering face, by the way he avoided looking at his son, that a storm was brewing. It broke when his sister Nina, after going to the well, returned with the news of Fomin's execution, and all that was being said about it.

The father's face was transformed, the veins swelled in his thin cheeks.

"Maybe we can learn more about it here, at home," he said venomously, without as much as a glance at his son. "Exclusive information. . . ." He liked to use such expressions occasionally. "Well, why don't you say something? Tell us all about it. You're closer to inside information," he said.

"How closer? To the polizei, or what?" said Vanya, paling.

"What was Tyulenin doing here yesterday? After curfew?"

"Who bothers about the curfew! As though Nina never goes out after curfew to meet her boy friends! He simply dropped in for a talk, it wasn't the first time. . . ."

"Stop lying!" rasped the father, banging the table with his open palm. "You know that means prison! If he's not worrying about his own head, why should we, your parents, have to answer for it?"

"That's not really what you want to know, Dad," said Vanya quietly and rose, ignoring his father, who again banged the table and insisted, "No, it's precisely that!" "You want to know," Vanya continued, "whether or not I'm a member of the underground organization? That's what you want to know. Well, I'm not. And as for Fomin, I heard about his execution for the first time, just now from Nina. And all I have to say is, serves him right, the skunk! You can see from what Nina's telling us that everybody's saying the same thing. And you think the same, too.

But I shan't conceal from you that I'm helping our people plenty. . . That's what all of us should do, especially myself—a member of the Youth League. I didn't say anything about it to you and Mum, so as not to worry you. . ."

"You heard that, Nastasya Ivanovna?" the father turned to his wife with a frenzied look in his eyes. "How kind-hearted and thoughtful! You've got no shame left in you! All my life I've worked for you. . . You've forgotten how we lived in the family barracks, twelve families altogether rolling about on the floor . . . twenty-eight children without counting the grown-ups? It was for you that your mother and I wore ourselves out. Look at her now. . . Alexandra never finished her schooling, neither did Ninka, we placed all our hopes on you, and now you go and push your own silly head into the noose. Look at your mother! She's cried her eyes out over you and you're blind to it all!"

"And what, in your opinion, should I do?"

"Go out and work! Ninka's working, go and do the same."

"Work for whom? For the Germans? So that they can kill more of our people? When our people come back again, you'll see I'll be first to go to work. . . Your son, my brother is in the Red Army, and you want me to go and help the Germans to kill him quicker!" said Vanya indignantly.

They were already standing, facing each other.

"And what about your food?" shouted his father. "And what d'ye want, wait until someone of those you're so hot for goes and betrays you! Sells you to the Germans! What d'ye know even of the people living in our street? What d'ye know of the kind they really are? But I know! They've got their own cares, their own interests. Only you alone are getting hot about things!"

"That's not true! . . What personal interests were you looking after when you sent all that state property to the rear?. . ."

"We're not talking about me. . . ."

"Yes, we are! Why d'ye think you're better than others?" said Vanya, supporting himself with the fingers of one hand on the table and thrusting his horn-rimmed glasses stubbornly forward. "Self-interest! Each one for himself and the devil take the hindmost!. . . But I want to know what interest you were serving when you'd been released from work especially when you knew that by remaining there you might land yourself in the soup. But sick as you were, you saw to the loading of stuff that wasn't yours, you lost sleep over it? Do you think you're the only one of your kind in the world? Even science is against that!. . ."

As it was Sunday, Nina was at home. She sat on the edge of her bed with knitted brows; not once did her eyes travel in the direction of the argument; as usual, it was impossible to guess what her thoughts were. . . . But the mother, prematurely aged, kindly, weak, whose whole life has been one dreary round of field work and housework, was trembling lest Alexander Fyodorovich in his anger should drive Vanya out and curse him. When Alexander Fyodorovich was speaking, she would nod in agreement, in order to soothe him, and when Vanya replied, she would look at her husband with an artificial smile, blinking, as though begging him to listen to the boy and excuse him, although both the old people realized what nonsense he was talking.

Alexander Fyodorovich, in his long jacket over an old Russian shirt, his bent old legs clothed in patched trousers and the feet thrust into slippers, stood there in the middle of the room, now pressing his clenched fists against his chest, now dropping his arms helplessly to his sides.

"I don't prove it by science, but by life!" he shouted.

"And science, isn't that life? . . . You're not the only one, there are other people too who're looking for justice!" said Vanya, with a passion unusual for him. "And you're even ashamed to admit the good in you!"

"I've got nothing to be ashamed of!"

"Then prove that I'm wrong! You can't convince me by shouting. I can let you have it your own way, say nothing, that's true. But all the same I shall act as I think right. . ."

Suddenly the father collapsed, his light eyes dulled.

"There we are, Nastasya Ivanovna," he said in an old man's high pipe. "We've reared that boy. . . Brought him up, and now he has no more need of us. Adieu!. . ." he threw out his arms, turned and left the room.

Nastasya Ivanovna ran after him. Nina remained sitting silently on the edge of the bed, without raising her head.

Vanya paced aimlessly from corner to corner of the room. The argument with his father had upset him. He even attempted to soothe himself by writing a poem to his brother as he had done in the past:

> My glorious and noble friend,
> My splendid brother Sasha. . .

Or:

My closest friend, my brother dear. . . .

No, the words would not come. And anyhow, there was no means of sending it to his brother.

And then suddenly it flashed on Vanya what he had to do, he had to visit Klava in Nizhne-Alexandrovka. . . .

Elena Koshevaya suffered doubly from the inability to decide whether she should forbid her son's activity or help him. Like all mothers, a continual, daily, grinding fear for her boy robbed her of all strength and initiative, and exhausted her physically and spiritually, etching deep lines on her face. Sometimes this fear became a dumb animal frenzy—she wanted to scream, to drag her son forcibly from that terrible fate which he was preparing for himself.

But she herself possessed many of the traits of her husband, Oleg's stepfather, the only deep, passionate love of her life, and her own spirit was such that she could not but sympathize with her son.

Often she felt hurt that he could conceal what he was doing from her, his mother; he had always been so open and frank with her, so considerate and obedient! She found it particularly galling to think that her own mother, Grandmother Vera, had evidently been taken into her son's confidence and

was also concealing things from her. Even her brother Kolya, to judge by all she saw, was in the plot. But who in the whole world was better able to understand her son than she herself, to share his thoughts and activities, to shield him with her love in a bitter hour? And a sure inner voice told her that he was concealing it all from her just because he was not sure of her.

Like all young mothers, she was prone to see the good qualities of her child, but she really did know and understand her son.

From the moment the leaflets with the mysterious signature, "Young Guard," began to circulate in the town, Elena Nikolayevna was sure that her son was not only a member of this organization, but was playing a leading part in it. She was both proud and agitated, she suffered torments, but she never even thought of winning his frankness by any artificial means.

Only one day, as though by chance, she asked:

"Who's your best friend now?"

Oleg answered rather shyly:

"M-my best friend's Nina Ivantsova. . . ."

But on the morning when she heard from her neighbours, the Saplins, about Fomin's execution, she almost screamed. She managed to restrain herself, and lay down on the bed, and Grandmother Vera, mysterious and unbending, like a mummy, placed a wet towel on her head.

Like all parents, Elena Nikolayevna never for a moment suspected her son of being directly involved in the execution. But what a world was this into which he had plunged! How bitter the struggle! What awful vengeance might be awaiting him! . . She could find no answer to her son in her heart, but she must, must break through this terrible mystery—it was impossible to go on living in this way! . . .

At that moment Oleg, neatly dressed as usual, clean, rosy, his head sunk between his shoulders, one of which was higher than the other, was sitting in the shed on a bunk opposite swarthy, large-nosed, agile Kolya Sumskoy perched on some logs, absorbed in a game of chess. From time to time they would in passing, as it were, exchange remarks from which an uninitiated listener might have well thought that these were two desperate criminals.

Sumskoy: "There's a grain collecting centre there at the station. . . As soon as the first milled grain was brought in, Kolya Mironov and Plaguta put ticks in. . . ."

Silence.

Koshevoi: "Have the peasants brought in the grain?"

Sumskoy: "They're being forced to do so. But most of it's in the stacks. No way of threshing it and getting it away."

Silence.

Koshevoi: "It's a good thing you've got your own lads in the State farm. We've discussed the matter at headquarters and decided on our own cells in the villages. Have you any weapons?"

"Very few."

"Well, you'll have to get them."

"Yes, but where?"

"Out on the steppe. And you can pinch from them—they're careless. . . ."

Sumskoy: "Excuse me—check."

Koshevoi: "You'll be thrown back, like an aggressor."

"I'm not the aggressor."

"But you're putting on the airs of a satellite!"

"My situation is more like that of France," laughed Sumskoy.

Silence.

Sumskoy: "Forgive me, maybe I shouldn't ask, but did your people have anything to do with this hanging?"

Koshevoi: "Who knows?"

"Fi-i-ine," said Kolya with the greatest satisfaction. "I think more of 'em should be removed, even if it meant attacking them from corners. And not so much the servants as the masters."

"You're right. They're not on their guard."

"Well, I believe, I'll give up," said Sumskoy, "the position is hopeless, and it's time for me to be getting home."

Oleg put the chess men away, then went to the door, looked out and returned.

"Take the oath. . . ."

Nothing more passed between them from the moment they had been sitting playing chess until they found themselves, standing face to face, both tall, Koshevoi broader in the shoulder, their hands on their sides, with a very simple and serious expression.

Sumskoy took a scrap of paper from the pocket of his tunic and paled.

"I, Nikolai Sumskoy," he said in a hushed voice, "joining the ranks of the Young Guard, solemnly swear to my comrades-in-arms, to my own much-suffering land, to my people. . . " Excitement and agitation brought a metallic ring into his voice, but fearing that it might be overheard, he lowered it. "And if I break this sacred oath under torture or from cowardice, may my name and my family be accursed for ever, and myself meet retribution at the stern hand of my comrades. Blood for blood, death for death! . . ."

"Congratulations. . . From now on, your life belongs not to you, but to the Party, to the whole people," said Oleg and pressed his hand.

The main thing now was to get into the house, when Mother was either asleep or pretending to sleep, to undress quietly and go to bed. And then there would be no need to avoid her clear, suffering eyes, to pretend that nothing had changed in life. . . .

Tiptoing lightly, feeling himself very big, Oleg entered the kitchen, opened the door softly and went into the room. As usual, the shutters and blackout curtains shut out the night. Today the fire had been laid in the stove, and the room was stifling. The tiny paraffin lamp, standing on an old upturned tin in order to raise the light and to avoid soiling the tablecloth, brought familiar objects into relief. His mother, always so punctual and tidy, was sitting on the bed, fully dressed twisting between her knees her swarthy little hands with their swelled veins, staring into the flame of the lamp.

How peaceful it was in the house! Uncle Kolya, who now spent most of his time with his friend, the engineer Kistrinov, had come home to sleep. Marina was sleeping and his

tle nephew, lips pouting, had probably
en asleep for a long time. Grandmother
s asleep too, and not even snoring. Even
e ticking of the clock was inaudible. . .
ly Mummie was awake; dear, darling
mmie. . . But the big thing is to keep
grip on one's feelings. . . To go past on
toe, like this, and lie down, and then one
uld easily pretend to be asleep. . . .
Tall, heavy, he tiptoed to his mother, fell
his knees before her and buried his face
her lap. He felt her hands on his cheeks,
lt the warmth of her, felt a light, far off
ent of jasmine, and the slightly bitter fra-
ance of wormwood or eggplant—whatever
was!. . .
"Mum, darling!" he whispered, looking up
her with his glowing eyes. "Of course you
derstand everything, everything, my dear!"
"I understand everything," she whispered,
nding over without looking at him.
He sought her eyes, but she hid them in
s silky hair, whispering and whispering to
m . . .
"Always. . . everywhere. . . be fearless. . .
strong. . . my eaglet. . . to your last
eath. . ."
"Enough, enough now . . .time to sleep. . ."
whispered. "Shall I let your hair down?"
And as so often in childhood days, his fin-
rs moved in her hair, seeking out the pins,
e after the other. Hiding her face, she bent
r head nearer to his hands, but he removed
e last pins and the thick tresses fell with
e soft, heavy sound of apples falling from
tree, covering her entirely.

A stranger—if such were possible—happen-
g to pass through the agricultural region
ring the German occupation, would have
en amazed at the contrasts. He would have
en hundreds of heaps of ashes, where in-
ead of villages and hamlets there remained
ly the charred brickwork of stoves, scorched
agments, and an occasional lone cat sunning
self on half burned porches already thickly
own with weeds. And on the other hand,
would have seen hamlets where no Ger-
an had even set foot with the exception
occasional gangs of marauding soldiers.
But there were plenty of villages where the
erman authorities had settled down in the
ay they deemed most satisfactory and prof-
able for themselves, where direct military
under, that is to say, plunder carried out
passing army units, and every kind of
trage and ferocity existed to no greater and
lesser extent than history justified in the
es of the German military occupation.
Nizhne-Alexandrovka, where Klava and her
other had taken refuge with the latter's
llations, was just a village of this kind.
Before the Germans came, the Cossack with
om they were living, Klava's uncle, had
en a collective farmer. He had not been a
igade leader, nor tended to the horses,
r been employed in the village cooperative
re. He was just an ordinary farmer working
th his family on the collective farm fields
d living on what he earned in the farm
d on the produce of his own personal plot.
With the arrival of the Germans this same
an Nikanorovich suffered the fate which
story dealt out to all peasant families dur-
ing the German occupation. They were plundered by the German troops passing through, so far as cattle, poultry and stocks of food were visible, that is to say plundered very considerably, but not stripped bare, for there is no peasant on earth with such traditional experience in hiding his property in troubled times as the Russian peasant.

After the army had passed and the Germans began to establish their "new order," Ivan Nikanorovich, like others, was informed that the land which had been granted in perpetuity to the Nizhne-Alexandrovka collective farm would now, like all the land, become the property of the German state. . . But—speaking through the Reichskommissar of Kiev, the new order told them—this land which had been united in a single large collective farm with so much difficulty would now be divided again into small holdings for the individual use of each Cossack. This measure, however, would be carried out only when all the Cossacks and other peasants had their own agricultural implements and draught animals. As this was at present impossible, the land would remain undivided as it had been, but now the property of the German state. A village elder, a Russian, appointed by the Germans, would direct its workings—and such were really appointed. The peasants would be divided into groups of ten families, with a Russian, appointed by the Germans—and such were appointed—to head each group. For their work on the land the peasants would receive grain according to a definite ration. And in order that they should work well, they must know that only those among them who did work well, would subsequently receive a holding for their individual use.

For the present the German state could not supply machines and petrol, nor yet horses; the labourers would have to manage with scythes and sickles: and for draught animals they could use their own cows; anybody sparing his cows could hardly hope to receive land for his individual use in the future. Naturally such methods of work demanded a great deal of labour power. Yet the German authorities not only made no attempt to preserve the labour power that was there, but spared no effort in driving to Germany all the ablebodied men and women.

As the German state at present was unable to estimate its requirements of meat, milk and eggs, it requisitioned for the moment from the hamlet of Nizhne-Alexandrovka one cow from every five families and one hog from each family, also fifty kilograms of potatoes, twenty eggs and three hundred litres of milk from each family. In view of the fact, however, that more might be demanded—and this demand actually was continual—the Cossacks and other peasants were forbidden to slaughter their cattle or poultry for their own use; if, however, they did insist on slaughtering a hog, then four families must combine for the purpose, and deliver at the same time three hogs to the German state.

To squeeze all this from Ivan Nikanorovich's family and those of his fellow-villagers, in addition to the heads over each ten families and the village elder, a district agricultural commandant's office was set up, headed by Sonderführer Sanders. In view of

the heat, the Sonderführer, like Oberleutnant Sprik, drove about the villages and hamlets in a tunic and shorts; at the sight of him the Cossack women spat and crossed themselves as though he were the devil himself. This district commandant's office and its staff were subordinate to a still more heavily staffed regional commandant's office. This was headed by Sonderführer Glücker, who wore trousers, it's true, but was too exalted ever to descend to ordinary human level. And this commandant's office and staff in turn were subordinate to the Landwirtschaftsgruppe headed by Major Stander—this group was so lofty that nobody ever saw it; but it again was only a department of the Wirtschaftskommando 9 headed by Dr. Lüde. This, in its turn, was subordinate on the one hand to the Field Commandant's office in Voroshilovgrad, or in other words, the administration of the gendarmerie, and on the other, to the main administration of State lands under the Reichskommissar himself in Kiev.

Sensing the weight of this heavy ladder loaded and overloaded with idlers and thieves with pompous titles, who were speaking an incomprehensible language and who had to be fed—and daily feeling the results of their presence, Ivan Nikanorovich and his fellow-villagers understood that the German authority was not only a brutal authority—that they had had brought home to them at once—but an authority not to be taken seriously, a sort of rule of plunderers, one might even say, a senseless rule.

Realizing this Ivan Nikanorovich and his fellow-villagers, like those of neighbouring villages and hamlets such as Gundorovskaya, Davydov, Makarov Yar and others, began to treat the German authorities as any self-respecting person should treat a stupid, senseless power—they began to deceive and hoodwink them.

The main way of hoodwinking the German authorities was in appearing to work without actually doing any, in scattering to the winds or if possible abstracting for their own use what actually was produced, and in concealing cattle, poultry and food. In order to make this deception easier, the Cossacks did everything possible to have their own people appointed as the heads of the ten-family groups and village elders. Just like every brutal power, the German authorities found sufficient despicable individuals to act as elders. But man is not immortal. There he was the elder, and suddenly he disappeared as though the earth had swallowed him up. . . .

Klava Kovalyova was eighteen, and far removed from all these things that were going on around her. She suffered only from the lack of freedom, and from the fact that she could not study and was deprived of her girl-friends, and because she did not know what had happened to her father. She gilded the hours by dreaming of Vanya, dreams which had a very definite and vivid form—that some day this nightmare would end and they would marry, and have children, and lead a very happy life.

Reading also helped to make the days pass, but it was very difficult to find books in Nizhne-Alexandrovka. So when she heard that a new teacher appointed by the new district authorities had come to the village in place of the old teacher who had evacuated, Klava decided that it would be a good idea to ask her for books.

The teacher lived near the school, in the house of her predecessor and even used her furniture, at least so the neighbours gossipped. Klava knocked and as she entered the room, which was on the shady side of the house and in addition had the curtains drawn, she glanced around to see who was there. At the sound, the teacher, who was dusting the windowsill with quills, half turned towards Klava. Suddenly one of her tilted thick eyebrows lifted and she staggered backwards against the sill, then straightened up and again looked carefully at Klava.

"You. . ."

She stopped short, an apologetic smile spread over her face and she came towards Klava.

She was a slender, blonde woman, simply dressed; her grey eyes had a direct, even stern look, her lips were clean cut, and this lent an added charm to the frank, bright smile which every now and then appeared on her face.

"The shelves which held the school library are smashed, Germans were billetted here; and you can find books in the most extraordinary places. But something still remained. Let's see what there is," she said, with a concise correct manner of speech to be found only among the best Russian teachers. "Are you from this village?"

"I suppose, I am," said Klava uncertainly.

"Why do you hesitate?"

Klava became confused.

The teacher looked at her directly.

"Let's sit down."

Klava remained standing.

"I've seen you in Krasnodon," said the teacher. Klava glanced at her out of the tail of her eye. "I thought that you had left," continued the teacher, with her frank smile.

"I didn't go anywhere."

"Then you were seeing somebody off."

"How do you know?" Klava glanced sideways at her companion with startled curiosity.

"I know. . . But don't worry. . . You're probably thinking—here's someone sent by the Germans. . ."

"I'm not thinking anything. . ."

"Yes, you are," the teacher laughed, until a flush overspread her face. "Tell me who were you seeing off?"

"My father."

"No, certainly not your father."

"Yes, it was my father."

"Very well, then, and who is your father?"

"An employee at the trust," said Klava, her face crimson.

"Sit down, don't be shy with me," and the teacher touched Klava's hand gently. She sat down. "It was your boy friend who was going?"

"What friend?" and Klava's heart began to thump.

"Don't try to conceal it, I know all about it. . ." The stern look had quite left the teacher's eyes, which were now dancing with kindly, youthful laughter.

"I shan't tell you whatever you do!" thought Klava, with a sudden gust of anger.

"I don't know what you're talking about . . . It's not nice to go on like this!" she said aloud and rose, red with indignation.

Unable to restrain herself any longer, the teacher laughed aloud, folding and unfolding her white hands in enjoyment and bending her head first to one side, then to the other.

"My dear . . . please forgive me . . . but your whole heart's in your face," she said. She rose quickly, and with a swift movement caught Klava by the shoulders and pressed the girl to her. "I'm only joking, don't be afraid of me. I'm just a simple Russian schoolteacher. . . After all, one's got to live; but one does not necessarily have to follow German ways."

There was a loud knock at the door.

Releasing Klava, the teacher went swiftly to the door and opened it a little.

"Marfa. . ." she said softly and gladly.

A tall, large-boned woman in a dazzlingly white kerchief and sun-blackened dusty bare feet, carrying a bundle under her arm, entered the room.

"Good day," she said, glancing inquiringly at Klava. "Living next door, as ye might say, and ne'er a minute to drop in for a bit o' talk!" she continued loudly to the teacher, baring her strong white teeth in a smile.

"What is your name? Klava! I'll take you to the classroom and you can look through the books. Only don't go away, I shall soon be with you."

"Well?" Ekaterina Pavlovna asked excitedly on her return.

Marfa sat down, covered her eyes with her large, gnarled, sunburned hand, and bitter lines etched themselves at the corners of her still youthful lips.

"I don't know if I'd call it good or bad," she said, lowering her hand. "A man came to me from Pogorelye, and he says my Gordei Kornienko's living. Katerina, tell me what to do!" she said, raising her head. "There are prisoners working at the woodcutting in Pogorelye, there's sixty of them and they're guarded. They're cutting the wood for the army, and my Gordei's there with them. They're living in barracks and can't get out. . . They're swollen with hunger. What'll I do? Go there?"

"How did he let you know?"

"There's others working there too, and he managed to get a word to one of our villagers, the Germans haven't caught on, he's from these parts."

Ekaterina Pavlovna looked at her visitor in silence. It was one of those cases when no counsel can be given. Marfa might stay a week in Pogorelye eating her heart out and never get a glimpse of her man. At the best, they might see each other from a distance, but that would only mean adding acute mental torment to the physical sufferings her husband was already undergoing. Even to throw him some food would be impossible—it was easy to imagine how things were in these barracks for war prisoners.

"Do as you think right. . ."

"But would ye go if you were in my place?" asked Marfa.

"I'd go," said Ekaterina Pavlovna with a sigh, "and you'll go too, though it'll be all for nothing."

"And I think it'll be for nought, too. . . I'm not going," said Marfa and covered her eyes with her hand.

"Does Kornei Tikhonovich know?"

"He says if they'd have some men, they'd get him out."

Ekaterina Pavlovna did not even ask about Ivan Fyodorovich; she knew if Marfa said nothing about him, then there was no news. Klava was standing by the cupboard looking at the books—books which she had read in her childhood; she felt sad at thus meeting these old friends. And it was sad to look at the empty black desks. The rays of the setting sun came slanting through the window, and their quiet, heavy golden light seemed a mournful, mature smile of farewell. Klava had even ceased to be troubled by curiosity as to how the teacher knew her, so sorrowful had her mood become.

"Have you found anything?" The teacher was standing there looking straight at Klava, her clean-cut lips pressed together, but with a sad look somewhere far away in the depths of her grey eyes. "Well, as you see, life is a thing of partings, and sometimes brings very cruel turns of the wheel," she continued. "When we're young, we live in a bustle, we don't realize that what is given to us, is given for the whole of our lives. . . If I could be your age again, I'd know what to do. But I can't even give the knowledge to you. . . If your friend comes, you must introduce him to me."

Thus it was that fate led Vanya Zemnukhov to Ekaterina Pavlovna, Protsenko's wife.

"It is terrible, how fate deals with people!" said Ekaterina Pavlovna, who had just heard from Vanya the depressing news of the destruction of the Krasnodon underground group. "Ostapchuk, as you call him, had a family in German-occupied territory, maybe in sad straits; perhaps that poor woman and her children are wandering about among strangers and still hoping that some day he will come and rescue them, and he's already dead. . . Or that woman who was here the other day. . ." And Ekaterina Pavlovna told him about Marfa and her husband. "So near—and yet not able to see each other. And then they'll drive him off somewhere further back, and he'll rot away. . . Is there a punishment severe enough for these butchers?!"

"Pogorelye—that's near us, one of our lads lives there," said Vanya, thinking about Victor Petrov. A vague thought was stirring within him. "Are there many prisoners? Are they strongly guarded?" he asked.

"Try to remember who of our people capable of organizing the others are still left in Krasnodon," she suddenly said, following up some inward train of thought.

Vanya mentioned Kondratovich. Then he recalled that there was a woman, a Communist, working in the post office.

"And what about those Red army men who remained behind after they had been cut off or stayed on for some other reason?"

"Plenty of those. . ." Vanya recalled wounded Red army men who had been concealed in the houses. He knew from Seryozha that Natalya Alexeyevna was still treating them.

"Get in touch with them and draw them in . . . it makes no difference that you are

young, that they're older than you," said Ekaterina Pavlovna with a smile. "You've an organization, and so far they have none. . . And another thing—the director of the Gorky school, Saplin, is hiding here in the workings. Tell his family that he's alive. . ."

Vanya explained his idea of making Klava the link between the Young Guard and the young people of the village, and asked Ekaterina Pavlovna to help Klava.

"Better if she doesn't know who I am!" said Ekaterina Pavlovna, smiling. "I'll just make friends with her."

"But how do you know about us, anyway?" Vanya could no longer restrain the question.

"That I shall never tell you, or you'll feel very awkward," she said, and a look of sadness appeared on her face.

"What are those secrets between you?" Klava asked Vanya jealously, when they were sitting in the darkness in Ivan Nikanorovich's home. Klava's mother who had always liked Vanya, and who since the events at the ford, had regarded him as a friend of the family, was sleeping peacefully on the puffy, stiflingly hot Cossack feather bed.

"Can you keep a secret?" Vanya asked in a whisper.

"Can you ask. . ."

"Swear it!"

"I swear it!"

"She told me that our director, Saplin, is alive, and asked me to tell his family. After that we just talked. . . Klava!" he said, softly and solemnly, taking her hand. "We've formed an organization among the young people to combat the Germans—will you join?"

"Are you in it?"

"Of course."

"Then of course I'll join!. . ." She laid her warm hand on his ear. "Because I'm yours, all yours, you understand?"

"You can take the oath now. Oleg and I wrote it out, I know it by heart, and you'll have to learn it too."

"I'll learn it, because I'm all yours. . ."

"You'll have to organize the young people here and in the nearby villages."

"I'll organize them all for you. . ."

"You mustn't take things so lightly. If anything goes wrong, it means death. . ."

"For you, too?"

"For me, too."

"I'm ready to die with you. . ."

"But I think, it would be better if we both remained alive."

"Of course, much better."

"You know, I'm going to sleep over there with the lads, I'd better be off, or it won't look well."

"But why go over there? I'm all yours. . . you understand, all yours," Klava's warm lips whispered in his ear.

By the end of September the Young Guard organization at the Pervomaisk mine, together with Vosmidomiki and Pit No. I-B, had become one of the largest underground youth groups. Most of the active and energetic young people from the top classes of the Pervomaisk schools had been drawn in. In addition, several young men from other parts, junior army officers who had been cut off and had found shelter in the district, joined the organization.

The Pervomaisk group had their own radio set and published the Soviet Information Bureau communiqués and leaflets written in Indian ink on pages from school note-books.

What excitement and alarm there was over that radio! In different houses, here and there, they had discovered all sorts of old, spoilt, cheap sets which had long been discarded, and which they now seized. Boris Glovan, a Moldavian who with his parents fled from Bessarabia and settled down in Krasnodon—he was called Aleko [1] in the group—undertook to assemble a set together from these odds and ends. But on his way home with spare parts and valves, Boris was arrested by the Polizei.

Boris, a clever Gipsy with white, flashing teeth, talked to the Polizei only in Rumanian, he shouted that they were depriving his family of the means of existence, he needed all this material to make cigarette lighters, and swore that he would complain to the Rumanian army command—there were always some Rumanian officers belonging to passing units quartered in Krasnodon. At Glovan's home they found several finished lighters and others half made—he actually did earn his bread by this work, so the Polizei released this representative of an allied power, although they confiscated the radio parts. But Glovan assembled the set out of those parts which still remained.

The Pervomaisk group maintained contact with the nearby villages through Lilya Ivanikhina, who had gone to work as a teacher in Sukhodol after recovering from imprisonment in a German camp. They were the main suppliers of arms: they made long excursions to the battlefields along the Donets, or stole them from German and Rumanian soldiers and officers during halts. When all the people in the Pervomaisk organization had been supplied, the surplus weapons were handed over to Seryozha Tyulenin and were concealed in a dump; its whereabouts was known only to Seryozha and to a very small circle.

Just as Oleg Koshevoi and Vanya Zemnukhov were the leading spirits of the Young Guard organization, and Kolya Sumskoy and Tossya Yeliseyenko of the Krasnodon group so Oulya Gromova and Anatoli Popov were the heart and soul of the Pervomaisk organization.

Anatoli Popov had been appointed commander of the Pervomaisk group by headquarters, and with his organizational talent, developed in the Youth League, and his naturally serious character, he brought into the group a feeling of responsibility, of discipline and determined courage that was based on the highly accurate and methodical work of all the young folks. Oulya Gromova for her part, wrote most of the calls and leaflets issued by the Pervomaisk group. Only now could it be seen what tremendous prestige this girl had acquired among her friends ever since the time when she had been studying with them, and had wandered over the steppe and sung and danced like all of them, an

[1] The hero of the poem *Gipsies* by Alexander Pushkin.

cited, and led the Pioneers,[1] this slender girl ith the heavy black plaits and eyes now parkling like stars, now full of some mysteri- us strength, a girl more silent than playful, ore sober than enthusiastic, but combining ll these qualities.

It is characteristic of youth to judge the al and the apparent, the lively and the dull, ie false and the true, not by means of study id experience, but from the first glance, ord, movement. At this time Oulya had no articular girl friends. She was equally atten- ve, kindly and exacting to all, but the girls ad only to see her, to exchange a few words ith her, to feel that this did not arise from ny narrowness of mind in her; they sensed hat this apparent indifference concealed a ast world of feeling and thought, various pinions of people, various attitudes towards iem, and that this world might come to ight with unexpected force, especially when er ethical standards were involved. From uch people even the least attention is an onour—what then if they open their hearts ven for an instant?

Her attitude towards the boys was equally ven. Not one of them could say that she lowed more friendliness to him than to the thers, and not one of them dared to contem- late such a possibility even in his innermost houghts. But a single glance from her eyes, ne single gesture, showed every lad that is did not arise from any conceited exagger- tion of her own importance, still less from ack of feeling, but from a whole concealed orld of passionate emotion which had not et found its full outlet, and which could ot expand itself in driblets. And Oulya as surrounded by that unconscious, pro- ective and disinterested adoration on the art of the boys which falls to the lot of xceptionally strong and pure girls.

It was for this very reason and not so much ecause she was well-read and clever that he freely and naturally exercised such an nfluence over her boy and girl companions n Pervomaisk, without even being conscious f it herself.

The girls had gathered at the home of the vanikhin sisters, as they often did now. lere they had a room to themselves, and he parents were rather naive and careless bout their daughters' activities. So the girls ad gathered there to make up first-aid out- ts for wounded.

It was Lyuba who had taken the material for andages from men of the German medical orps who had been quartered in her house. he had taken it casually, without attaching ny importance to it. But on learning about e material Oulya immediately decided to ake use of it.

"Each of the boys should have a first-aid utfit. They're not like us, they'll have to ght," she said.

And maybe she was looking very far ahead hen she added:

"For the time will come when we will tack, and then we shall need a great many ndages."

So they sat there and made the packages, d even Shura Dubrovina, a student, who had previously been considered not very sociable, was taking part in the work, because her affection for Maya Peglivanova had brought her too into the Young Guard.

"You know, girls, what we're all like now?" said slender Sasha Bondareva. "We're like the old women who used to work at the pit once upon a time, and then were pensioned or lived with their children. I've seen no end of them at Granny's. And every day they'd come and sit there knitting, sewing, playing patience, or helping Granny to peel the potatoes. They'd sit for hours without saying a word, then one of them would get up, stretch herself, yawn and say: 'Well, gossips, what do you say about a drop to warm us?' and they'd all smile under their noses. And another would say: 'Wouldn't do us any harm, just a drop wouldn't. . .' And they'd all fumble about and put in their coppers, and the next thing you'd see, there'd be a little bottle on the table, it's not so much they need, these old girls. They'd drink a thimbleful, hold up their hands under their chins like this and start singing. . ."

"Oh—Sasha is always thinking of something funny!" laughed the girls. "And why shouldn't we fix up something like the old women, for that matter. . . ."

Just then Nina Ivantsova arrived. Nina seldom sat with the girls nowadays; she was headquarters messenger, but where it was, this headquarters, and who composed it, the girls did not know. The word "headquarters" gave them the idea of grown-up people sitting somewhere underground, perhaps in a real dugout, with maps hanging on the walls, and they themselves armed; and they had a radio with which they could contact the front and perhaps even Moscow. And now here came Nina Ivantsova and called Oulya out; that meant that she had brought some new assignment. Indeed, a few minutes later Oulya returned and said that she would have to go. Then she called Maya Peglivanova aside and told her that the girls should distribute the first-aid outfits among the houses, while seven or eight packages should be brought to her, as they might soon be needed.

Before a quarter of an hour had passed Oulya had climbed from her own garden to the Popovs', picking up her skirt and throwing first one long slender leg, then the other, over the fence. There she found Anatoli Popov and Victor Petrov lying opposite each other in the high grass under an old cherry-tree, studying at a map of the district.

They saw Oulya while she was still far off, and when she approached, as though by tacit consent, continued examining the map. With an abrupt movement of her hands Oulya threw her plaits back over her shoulders, gathered her skirt round her legs and sat down beside them, hugging her knees, and also began to study the map.

The assignment, which Anatoli and Victor already knew, and which had been the cause of their summoning Oulya, was the first serious test for the Pervomaisk group. The Young Guard headquarters had instructed them to free the war prisoners working at wood cutting near the hamlet of Pogorelye.

"Where does the guard live?" asked Anatoli.

[1] The children's organization.

"They live in the houses on the right of the road, in the village itself. The barrack is here on the left, near that thicket, see! There used to be a store there. They've only made pallet beds and laid barbed wire round. And just one sentry. . . I think it would pay better to let the guard alone and just remove the sentry. . . A pity, though; it would be worth while to settle them all," said Victor viciously.

Victor Petrov had altered considerably since his father's death. He lay there in his dark corduroy jacket, chewing a dry blade of grass, his bold eyes glancing sombrely at Anatoli, and speaking somewhat reluctantly:

"The prisoners are locked up at night time but we can take Glovan and his tools, he'll manage things without any noise. . ."

Anatoli raised his eyes to Oulya.

"What do you think?" he asked.

Although she had not heard the beginning of their conversation, with that instant understanding which they had all acquired from the very outset of their activity, Oulya immediately sensed the essence of what dissatisfied Victor.

"I understand Victor very well," she said. "It certainly would be better to wipe out all the guard. But we haven't yet grown up to such an operation," she concluded in her usual deep, calm tones.

"I think the same," said Anatoli. "We must take the simplest and quickest measures."

The next evening they came one by one, to meet in the wood on the banks of the Donets near Pogorelye, five of them—Anatoli and Victor, their schoolfriends Volodya Ragozin, Zhenya Shepelev, the youngest of them, and Boris Glovan. All of them were armed with revolvers, and in addition Victor had an old dagger which he always carried now in his belt beneath the corduroy jacket. Boris Glovan had brought shears, a jemmy and a screw driver.

It was a fresh, moonless, starlit night of early autumn in the south. The lads were lying on the steep right bank of the river. The bushes, which at this point went right down to the water's edge, rustled above them, the river gleamed slightly as it flowed along almost silently. Lower down where it met a landslip, pushed through the soft soil or tugged at some willow, the quiet current gurgled and sucked like a calf sucking at its mother's udder. The opposite bank, level and even, disappeared in the dim, silvery night.

They were waiting for midnight, when the sentry would be relieved.

So lovely and mysterious was the night, with this gurgling and sucking sound of water, a sound which had something of childhood in it, that each of them found it impossible to shake off the strange feeling of unreality—could it be that they would have to leave the river, leave this sound and engage in a struggle with the German sentry, with barbed wire, with locks and bolts? The river and its sounds were so near and familiar to them, while that lying ahead was something they had to do for the first time and none of them could even imagine what it would be like. But they concealed this feeling from each other and whispered of what was near to them.

"Victor, do you remember this place? It is the same one, isn't it?" Anatoli asked.

"No, that was a little lower down, over there where it's gurgling by the landslide. I had to swim from the other bank, and all the time I was afraid that it'd drag you further down, right to the rapids. . ."

"To tell the truth, I was scared stiff," said Anatoli with his childlike smile. "After all, I was almost drowning. . ."

"Zhenya Moshkov and I were coming out of the woods and, devil take it! I still can't swim," said thin, lanky Volodya Ragozin from under the big peak of his cap which was pulled down over his eyes so that his face was barely visible. "And if Zhenya Moshkov hadn't dived in just as he was in his clothes, he wouldn't have got you out," he added to Victor.

"Of course he wouldn't," Victor agreed. "And what d'you hear of Moshkov?"

"Nothing much," said Ragozin. "He's a junior lieutenant in the infantry. And those junior officers, they're the fellows that die like flies. . ."

"No, your Donets is quiet, you should see our Dniester—there's a river for you!" said Boris Glovan, raising himself on his elbow, his white teeth flashing in the darkness. "Swift! Beautiful! If you're drowning in that there's no saving you. And then, what sort of forest d'ye call this? We live on the steppe too, but there's different sort of trees by the Dniester. Black poplars, yews—you can't get your arms round them, and the tops are in the clouds. . ."

"That's where you should live," said Zhenya Shepelev. "It's just hell that people can't live where they want. . . All this war and all that. . . Everyone should live where they want. If you like Brazil—all right! As for me, I'd just go on living in the Donbas. I like it here. . ."

"But if you really want a quiet life, come to us in Tiraspol after the war," said Glovan, laughing quietly. "Only not on some tiresome job, of course. Lord forbid that you should be representative of a cattle purchasing organization, for instance! Come and be chairman of the local Red Cross society. Eh? that's a grand job!" Glovan concluded merrily.

"Quiet there—think you're at a party?" said Anatoli good-humouredly. And again they lay listening to the river gurgling and sucking.

"Time. . ." said Anatoli.

And in an instant, that simple, instinctive feeling of nature and life's happiness had gone, left them completely.

Keeping to the edge of the vista, winding round open spaces in Indian file headed by Victor, who knew every bush, they entered the grove. Beyond it stood the barracks, invisible from where they were standing. They lay down for a little while to listen. The silence was absolute. Victor beckoned and they crawled on.

Now they were at the very edge of the grove. The high barracks, with its single-sloped roof, was before them. An ordinary barracks—but people were confined within its walls and

t had a menacing, terrible look. The ground round it was bare. To the left, loomed the gure of the sentry. Still further to the left as the road, and further along, out of sight, ne first houses of the village.

There was still about half an hour to go efore the guard would be relieved, and all nat time they lay there, never taking their yes from the dark, motionless figure of ne sentry.

At last they heard the sound of footsteps pproaching somewhere on their left, two ien were marching in step, along the road, oming closer to them. That was the non-com- ion duty and the new sentry. The first sen- y stiffened to attention as they approached.

There was a muffled command, the rattle f arms, the clicking of heels on the ground. wo figures detached themselves, and again ne sounds of footsteps were heard on the oad, the sound receded away, became faint- r, and disappeared in the night.

Anatoli turned his head slightly towards henya Shepelev, but the latter had already rawled into the grove; Zhenya had to pass nrough the outskirts of the village and keep atch near the cottage where the guard was uartered.

The sentry was pacing back and forth along ie barbed wire like a wolf in a cage. He step- d briskly, his rifle slung over his shoulder, d they could hear him rubbing his hands— was evidently chilled from sleep.

Anatoli touched Victor's hand, and press- it gently.

"Maybe, we'll go together?" he whispered inging his lips close to Victor's ear.

This was a moment's weakness arising from iendship. Victor shook his head and crawl- forward.

Anatoli, Boris Glovan and Volodya Ra- zin, holding their breath, watched Victor d the sentry. Every time Victor made a und they were sure he would be discovered. ut he continued to crawl on, and now his rduroy jacket had disappeared and they uld neither see nor hear him. With taut rves they waited for the thing to happen. heir eyes were glued to the dark figure of ie sentry, who continued his pacing along ie barbed wire, until it seemed as though a ng, long time had passed and dawn would on be breaking. .

Victor crawled forward, dim memories a half-forgotten game from his childhood ys flickering into his mind, when he would y to outwit a comrade during a game. He gged the ground, moving first one, then e other agile arm, then the legs, then again ms and legs, without lifting his body. hen the sentry was coming towards him, ictor lay motionless; when he was moving vay, he crawled on again, forcing himself t to hurry.

His heart was beating hard, but he felt fear. Up to the moment when he had be- n to crawl, he had forced himself to think out his father, in order to stimulate his irst for vengeance. But now he had complete- forgotten about all that. His whole being as now concentrated on crawling up to the ntry unperceived.

In this way he reached the corner of the rbed wire, where it turned at a right angle round the barracks, and froze to the spot. The sentry came to the opposite corner and turned back. Victor got out his dagger, gripped it between his teeth, and crawled to meet the man. His eyes were already so accustomed to the darkness that he could even see the wire, but he felt sure that the sentry could see equally well, and would most certainly notice him on the ground when he approached. But the man came as far as the passage through the barbed wire and stopped. Victor knew that this was no ordinary passage, but closed by some kind of arrangement of hurdles covered with barbed wire. He waited tensely, but the sentry, without removing his rifle from his shoulder, thrust his hands into his pockets and stood motionless, his back to the barracks, his head slightly sunk between his shoulders.

And suddenly Victor experienced the same feeling as his friends, who were waiting with bated breath for him to act—he felt that a great deal of time had passed and that soon the dawn would break. And without thinking that now the sentry could easily see him, and still easier hear him, because the sound of his own footsteps no longer prevented the sentry hearing the outside sounds, Victor crawled straight towards him. No more than two metres divided them, and still the sentry was standing there, hands in his pockets, his rifle on his shoulder and his head hunched between his shoulders, swaying slightly. . . Victor could never remember whether he crawled still nearer or jumped straight up, but suddenly he found himself on his feet beside the man and raised his dagger. The sentry opened his eyes and turned his head quickly —he was a thin, elderly German, his face covered with stubble—a startled, frantic expression flashed into his eyes, and without having time to take his hands from his pockets, he emitted a terrible, soft sound:

"Ee-kh!"

With all his strength Victor plunged the dagger into the man's throat, to the left of the chin. It buried itself to the hilt in something soft beyond the collar bone. The German fell, and Victor flung himself on top of him, ready to strike again. But the man was already choking, blood flowed from his mouth. Victor turned aside and threw away the dripping dagger. Suddenly he began to vomit so violently that he covered his mouth with his left sleeve, in order to stifle the sound.

At that moment he saw Anatoli beside him, handing him the dagger and whispering:

"Keep it as a souvenir. . ."

Victor put away the dagger and Ragozin took his arm and said:

"Let's make for the road! . ."

Victor took out his revolver, and together with Ragozin ran onto the road, where they lay down.

Boris Glovan, fearing to get mixed up with those hurdles and barbed wire in the darkness, snipped his way through the wire with professional swiftness. Then he and Anatoli dashed to the door of the barracks. Glovan felt for the fastening—an ordinary iron bolt secured by a padlock. He pushed his jemmy into the padlock and broke it. They shot the bolt and, tense with excitement, opened the door. They were met by a wave

of hot foul air. The prisoners awakened, somebody stirred to right and left of them, somebody asked something in a sleepy, startled voice.

"Comrades. . ." said Anatoli and excitement deprived him of voice.

There were muffled exclamations of joy, but other voices hushed them.

"Go out through the woods towards the river, and go on up and down the bank," said Anatoli, pulling himself together. "Is Gordei Kornienko here?"

"He's here!" said somebody from the pile of stirring bodies.

"Go home to your wife. . ." Anatoli left the barrack and stood by the door.

"Thank you, boys, you saved us. . ." came to his ears.

The prisoners rushed to the hurdles wound about with barbed wire, but Glovan seized them and sent them to the gap which he had cut. They streamed through the passage. Suddenly somebody seized Anatoli's shoulder with both hands and whispered in a frenzy of joy:

"Anatoli? . . Anatoli? . ."

Anatoli started, brought his face close to that of the figure holding him.

"Zhenya Moshkov. . ." said Anatoli, for some reason not even feeling any particular surprise.

"I recognized your voice!" said Moshkov.

"Wait a bit. . . We'll go together. . ."

It was still long before dawn when Anatoli, Victor and Zhenya Moshkov, who had separated from the others, sat down to rest at the bottom of a narrow, bushy ravine. Moshkov was barefoot, haggard, clothed in evil-smelling rags, his hair twisted and matted.

They felt now that it was a miracle to have rescued Moshkov, about whom they had only just been talking on the river bank. Despite his fatigue, Anatoli was happy and excited. He kept recalling first one, then another incident in the operation which had been concluded so successfully, praised Victor and Glovan, and the other lads, and again returned to the rescue of Zhenya Moshkov.

Victor replied morosely, in monosyllables, and Moshkov said nothing at all. In the end Anatoli also fell silent. It became very quiet and dark in the ravine.

Suddenly a glow appeared lower down the Donets. It came spreading over a large part of the sky which hung like a red canopy over the fire itself, lighting up even the ravine.

"Where's that?" Victor asked quietly.

"Gundorovski," said Anatoli after a moment's silence. "That's Kashuk. . ." he continued, lowering his voice. "Burning the stacks. He burns them every night now . . ."

"We did well at school, saw a splendid future in front of us, and now we've got to do things like this?" said Victor suddenly, forcefully. "Can't help it . . ."

"Boys! Am I really free? Free?" said Zhenya Moshkov hoarsely, and, covering his face with his hands, collapsed on the dry grass.

Although the Young Guard had already carried out a number of important assignments, there was nothing to show that the Germans were paying any particular attention to the organization, or searching for it.

Just as during a fierce drought the movement of underground waters never ceases, and streams and rivers still continue to rise, in the same way the activities of the Young Guard merged in the well concealed, widely dispersed but extensive movement of millions of people striving to regain their real and rightful life, which they had enjoyed until the coming of the Germans. And in this multitude of small and big attacks against them, the Germans were a long time in coming upon traces of the Young Guard.

The front was now so far away that the Germans in Krasnodon looked upon the town as an outlying province of the German Reich, in which the new order was established for ever.

All was quiet on the various fronts—in the west and the east, in the north and the south, as though everybody was listening to the roar of the great battle at Stalingrad. And there was something so habitual, permanent, in the daily short report coming from the Stalingrad and Mozdok districts all through September, and then October, that one felt that it would always be like that.

The stream of prisoners driven westward through Krasnodon had ceased entirely. But German and Rumanian units with baggage, guns and tanks still continued to stream eastward. They disappeared and did not return, and fresh units followed them; German and Rumanian soldiers and officers were continually spending days or nights in the town, until it seemed as though this, too, would go on for ever.

For several days, a German ace returning to the front from hospital and a Rumanian officer with a batman, a gay fellow who spoke Russian and pilfered whatever he laid eyes on, be it a head of garlic or a photo frame, were billetted in the Korostylevs' and Koshevois' house.

The Rumanian officer in his salad-green uniform was short, black-eyed and black-whiskered, and so agile that even the tip of his nose seemed to be constantly moving. He settled down in Uncle Kolya's room and spent the whole day walking about the town in civilian clothes, examining the pits, the workshops and offices, and the military units.

"Why does your officer go about in civvies?" Uncle Kolya asked the batman, with whom he was on friendly terms. The batman puffed out his cheeks, then clapped them with his hands, shooting out the air like a circus clown, and said, in the most good-humoured tone:

"A spy!"

After that conversation Uncle Kolya never again found his pipe.

The German ace had taken possession of the largest room, crowding Elena Nikolayevna out to grandmother's room, and Oleg to the shed. He was a large, flaxen man with red eyes, covered with decorations for the fighting in France and for Kharkov. He was dead drunk when he was brought from the commandant's office, and the only reason why he spent several days there was because he continued drinking day and night, without ever giving himself time to sober up.

He tried to induce every person in the house

o join in his orgy, with the exception of he Rumanian, whom he simply never noiced; he could not stand being without omebody to talk with even for a second. Speaking a vile German-Russian he explained ow first of all he would beat the Bolsheviks, hen the English, then the Americans, and hen everything would be fine. But towards he end of his stay, his spirits fell.

"Stalingrad! . . Ha! . ." he said, raising is red index finger. "Bolsheviks shoot . . . Puh! . . Me kaput! . ." and dismal tears tood in his red eyes.

Before leaving he sobered up just enough o shoot some chickens in the yard. He had owhere to put them, so he simply tied their egs and they lay there on the porch while e collected his things.

The Rumanian batman summoned Oleg, uffed out his cheeks, clapped them and shot ut the air, in his clownlike way, and pointed o the chickens.

"Civilization!" he said good-humouredly.

And Oleg never found his penknife again.

The "new order" brought to Krasnodon such "cream of society" as might be found in Heidelburg or Baden-Baden—a whole ladder f ranks and titles. At the very top of the ladder stood Hauptwachtmeister Brückner, Wachtmeister Balder and the chief administrator Schweide, a mining expert, a lieutenant in what was called the Mining Battalion. This was an elderly, thin, greyish and very methodical German, accustomed to working in the German establishments, where everything goes its fixed and eternally appointed way and everything is catered for. Entering upon his duties, he discovered to his surprise that here nothing was catered for. There were no workers, no machinery, no instruments, no transport, no timber, and for that matter, no pit. Coming to the sensible conclusion that in such circumstances there was no coal either, he confined his labours to checking up every morning whether the Russian stableboys had given the administration horses their oats, and to signing papers. The rest of his time he devoted to his poultry-yard, his pigsties and cowsheds, and to giving parties to officials in the German administration.

A little lower down the ladder were Oberleutnant Sprik and Sonderführer Sanders in his shorts. Still lower—the Polizei chief Solikovsky and Burgomeister Stetsenko. A very stout man drunk from early morning, he would walk along the muddy streets with his umbrella every day at the same hour and just as punctually return, as though he had really done something important. And on the very bottom rung was Unteroffizier Fenbong and his soldiers, who actually did everything.

How miserable and dismal were those mining towns during the October rains. Muddy, without fuel, without light, with all the fences cut down, and broken windows gaping in the empty houses from which movable articles had been stolen by passing soldiers and the furniture by officials of the German administration for their quarters. The people, thin, emaciated, aged, hardly recognized each other when they met. And the most simple, unimaginative person would suddenly stop in the street or awaken in the night, thinking—"Can all this be real? Is it not a dream, a nightmare, or have I gone mad?"

On such a gloomy day, when the wind had been driving the heavy autumn rain for several days, Lyuba arrived from Voroshilovgrad in a low, luxurious-looking German car, and a young German lieutenant, jumping out, opened the door for her and saluted, while she, without looking round, ran up the steps of her home holding her small suitcase.

This time her mother, Efrosinya Mironovna, was unable to contain herself, and remarked as she and Lyuba were going to bed:

"You should be more careful, Lyubushka. . . You know what people are saying? 'She seems very friendly with the Germans,' they're saying."

"Is that what people are saying? That's splendid, Mummie, that just suits me," said Lyuba laughing, and fell asleep curled up in a ball.

Next morning, when Vanya Zemnukhov learned of her arrival his long legs brought him almost at a run across the waste ground separating his street from Vosmidomiki, and muddy to the knees, numbed with cold, he dashed into the Shevtsovs' big sitting room, without even knocking.

Lyuba, quite alone, was holding a small mirror in one hand, while the other was engaged in patting her hair, which she had not yet done, and stroking her simple green housefrock, as she walked up and down the room barefoot, communing with herself.

"Eh, Lyuba-Lyubushka! Why are all the boys so wild about you—I just can't understand . . . What's there so nice about you? Mouth too big, eyes too small, a funny face and your figure. . . Well, yes, your figure's all right, yes, quite all right, in fact. . . But if you take it all in all. . . And it isn't as if you ran after them, not a bit of it. No, I just don't understand it. . ."

And tilting her head this way and that in front of the mirror, shaking her curls she began dancing up and down the room, her bare feet striking the floor sharply, singing to herself:

"Lyuba-Lyubushka,
Lyuba-golubushka. . ."[1]

Vanya, who had been quietly watching her considered that the time had come to cough.

Lyuba, far from being abashed, had a rather challenging look about her as she slowly put down the mirror, turned round, recognized Vanya, screwed up her blue eyes and let out a peal of laughter.

"I can see exactly what's going to happen to Sergei Levashov," said Vanya in his deep bass. "He'll have to get you slippers from the tsarina herself. . . !"[2]

"You know, Vanya, the amazing thing is that I like you even better than Sergei!" said Lyuba, slightly put out.

"And I've got such bad eyesight that to tell the truth all girls look alike to me. I can only tell them by their voices, and

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[1] Golubushka—little dove, dear.

[2] A reference to Gogol's tale *Christmas Eve*, where the hero gets the tsarina's slippers for his capricious sweetheart.

I like them with deep contraltos like an organ, while your voice is like a bell!" Vanya replied, unruffled. "Anybody at home?"

"Nobody. . . Mummie's gone to the Ivantsovs'."

"Let's sit down, shall we? Put away that mirror, or it'll get on my nerves . . . Lyubov Grigoryevna! Has it occurred to you in the course of your daily round that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution is drawing near?"

"Of course, it has!" said Lyuba, although as a matter of fact, she had quite forgotten all about it.

Vanya bent over and whispered something in her ear.

"Oh, fine! Good for you! A great idea!" And she impulsively gave Vanya such a hearty kiss right on the lips that he nearly lost his glasses in his confusion.

"Mummie dear, have you ever dyed any clothes?"

Lyuba's mother looked blankly at her.

"Tell me, have you ever had a white blouse and wanted to turn it . . . blue?"

"Of course, I've often done it."

"And could you dye it red, too?"

"Why, it's all the same what colour you want . ."

"Tell me how to do it, Mummie, maybe I'll be wanting to dye something."

". . . Aunt Marussya, have you ever dyed clothes, made them a different colour?" Volodya Osmukhin asked his aunt Litvinova, who lived with her children in a house not far from the Osmukhins'.

"Of course, Volodya, often."

"Could you dye two or three pillow-cases red for me?"

"But sometimes the colour runs, Volodya dear, and you'd have a red cheek and ear."

"No, I don't mean to sleep on them, I just want them for the daytime, to make the place look nice. . ."

". . . Dad, I know you can make fine dyes for metal as well as for wood. Could you dye a sheet red? It's these underground people want it, you understand—'Give us a red sheet,' they say—well, what can you say to them!" said Zhora Arutyunyants to his father.

"I can dye it all right. But—a sheet? What about mother?" the father replied with some apprehension.

"It's about time you made up your mind who's head of this house, you or Mother! After all! . . It's clear enough—they've got to have a real red sheet . . ."

Valya Borts never spoke to Seryozha about his note to her, and he never asked her about it. But from that day they became inseparable, always looking for each other as soon as day broke. Usually Seryozha was the first to appear on Derevyanny Street, where the family not only became accustomed to seeing the thin lad with his crisp curly hair who went barefoot even on these cold October days, but became really fond of him—both Maria Andreyevna and especially little Lucy, although he was usually rather reserved in their presence.

One day, little Lucy even asked him:

"Why don't you like wearing boots?"

"Easier to dance barefoot," laughed Seryozha.

But after that he began coming in boots—he had simply not been able to find time to get them mended.

On one of those days when the Young Guards were so tense and uncommonly intent on the matter of dyeing cloth, Seryozha and Valya were, for the fourth time, to scatter leaflets during a cinema show at the Summer Theatre.

This theatre, formerly the Lenin Club, was housed in a high frame building with an uncomfortable, open stage, equipped with screen for cinema shows. Long rows of unpainted benches were sunk into the ground, the back rows being higher than the front. After taking Krasnodon, the Germans used to show films here, most of them newsreels from the front, and sometimes a travelling vaudeville troupe would give a performance. The seats were not numbered, and the price was the same everywhere—the places occupied by the spectators depended on their own energy and initiative.

As usual, Valya made her way to the far side of the auditorium, towards the back, while Seryozha remained at the entrance side, nearer the front. Just when the lights went down and late comers were still groping for their places, they sent the leaflets sailing into the midst of the audience.

Cries and exclamations resounded through the hall. Seryozha and Valya met at their usual place, near the fourth column from the stage. As usual, there were more people than there were seats, they both remained among those crowding the aisle. At the moment when the sparkling, dusty shaft of light shot from the operator's window onto the screen, Seryozha lightly touched Valya's elbow with his own, and glanced significantly to the left of the stage. Covering the whole of that side, a large crimson banner with a black swastika on a yellow circle in the centre hung from the upper flies, slightly swaying in the draught.

"I'm going onto the stage. You leave with the rest of the people, and talk to the girl at the door. . . If they try to clear up the hall, hold them up for at least five minutes," he whispered into Valya's ear.

She nodded silently.

On the screen, over the German title of the film, appeared the Russian translation in large white letters: "Her first experience."

"And afterwards, to your place?" asked Seryozha rather bashfully.

Valya nodded.

Barely had the lights gone down for the last part of the film, when Seryozha had disappeared from Valya's side. He vanished as only Seryozha could. Not a movement could be seen among the people standing in the aisle, it was amazing how he did it. Valya began slowly moving towards the exit, never taking her eyes from the little door to the right of the stage, the only one through which Seryozha could get to the back of the stage. The film ended, and the lights went up, as the people surged noisily towards the door. Still Valya had seen nothing.

She left the theatre with the crowd and stopped under the tree opposite the door. It was cold, dark and wet in the park, the

leaves had not yet fallen and they rustled heavily in the damp air as though sighing. Now the last of the audience were leaving the theatre. Valya ran to the ticket collector, and stooped down as though searching for something in the faint light coming through the open door.

"You haven't seen a purse here, a little leather one?"

"Why, where should I be looking for it! The people have just left!" said the elderly ticket collector.

Stooping, Valya gingerly fumbled here and there in the trampled mud.

"It must be somewhere here. . . I pulled out my handkerchief as I was coming out, went on a bit, and then missed my purse."

The ticket collector also began to look around.

Meanwhile, Seryozha, who had ignored the little door, and clambered onto the stage over the footlights, was tugging at the banner with all his might, trying to release it from the flies; something held it, Seryozha grasped it higher up, jumped and hung from his bent arms. The banner gave and he nearly fell with it into the orchestra pit.

He stood there alone on the stage in front of the semi-dark, empty auditorium and the open door leading into the park and carefully, unhurriedly, folded the huge fascist banner into half, a quarter, and then an eighth of its size, in order to tuck it away under his jacket.

The watchman, after closing the exit to the operator's cubbyhole, came out of the hall, to the ticket collector and Valya, who were still looking for her purse.

"The light! As though you don't know what we can get for that!" said the watchman angrily. "Put it out, I'll lock up. . ."

Valya ran up to him and seized the lapel of his jacket.

"Oh, please, please, just a second!" she pleaded. "I've lost my purse, and I shan't be able to see anything if you shut the door, just a second!" she repeated, clinging to his jacket.

"Where d'ye think ye'll find it here?" said the watchman, softening, and involuntarily looking about him.

At that instant a boy with his cap pulled low over his eyes, round as a dumpling, with thin legs—extraordinarily thin under his round, plump body, dashed out of the empty theatre, and with a squeal, emitted a mournful wail—"Me-e-eh!" and disappeared into the darkness.

Valya managed to sigh hypocritically:

"Oh, what a shame! . ."

But she could do no more, and overcome with suppressed laughter, covered her face with her hands and almost ran from the theatre.

After Oleg had come to an understanding with his mother, there was nothing farther to hinder his work—the whole house was drawn into it, his family were his assistants, his mother the first of them.

Nobody could have said what crucible in that sixteen-year-old lad's heart was melting together the valuable experience of the older generation gathered from books and his stepfather's stories, with that which he and his own comrades had themselves experienced between the short but tense period of defeat and the first realization of their ideas. But as the activities of the Young Guard developed and extended, Oleg gained more and more influence among his comrades, and became increasingly conscious of the fact. He was so sociable and full of life, so frankly friendly, that not only the idea of dominating his comrades, but even the slightest lack of consideration for them, for their opinions and experience, would have been abhorrent to him. But he became increasingly aware that the success or failure of their work depended to a considerable degree upon how far he, of all of them had provided for everything, or made mistakes.

He was close friends with a girl older than himself, a girl unusually modest, fearless, quiet and romantic, with thick wavy dark hair falling around her strong shoulders, with lovely sunburned hands and a passionate, challenging look in the arched brows over her wide brown eyes. Nina Ivantsova caught his every glance and movement and willingly, fearlessly and accurately carried out his every assignment.

They could sit together in silence for hours with not even a trace of boredom, busy with leaflets, reports to partisan regional headquarters and temporary Youth League membership cards. But whenever they talked their heads soared into the clouds, everything that had been created by the human spirit and accessible to youth passed before their minds. Sometimes when they were together and could contain their laughter no longer, Oleg, boyishly, would wipe the tears from his eyes while Nina would join in with her quiet girlish laughter, but sometimes she would smile mysteriously with a more womanly air as though withholding some secret from him.

And so it was that in this most difficult period, Oleg grew to manhood. He was always energetic and full of life, gay yet efficient and very exacting. Boylike, he wanted to do everything himself, he wanted to paste up the leaflets, burn the wheat, steal arms and kill Germans. Once at one of the staff-meetings, when Turkenich and Vanya Zemnukhov, after having agreed beforehand, accused him of carelessness, he was as embarrassed as a schoolboy caught red-handed.

On November the sixth, the eve of the October holiday, the entire staff of the Young Guard, including the liaison members, Valya Borts, Nina and Olya Ivantsova, gathered at the Koshevois'. Oleg had decided to celebrate the occasion by solemnly initiating Radik Yurkin into the Youth League.

Radik Yurkin was no longer the boy with the quiet eyes who had told Zhora Arutyunyants: "I'm used to going to bed early." After his part in Fomin's execution, Radik Yurkin had been included in Tyulenin's fighting group and had taken part in night attacks on German lorries. He sat there quite confidently by the door, gazing intently at the window opposite, while Oleg delivered the opening speech, and then Tyulenin spoke, supporting his application. Sometimes Radik felt a tinge of curiosity about these people who were now deciding his fate. And his

calm eyes under their long lashes travelled over the members of the staff sitting around the large dining table laid for dinner. But immediately two girls—one fair, the other dark—smiled at him so tenderly and both of them were so pretty, that Radik felt an unusual rush of embarrassment and lowered his eyes.

"Any que-questions to Comrade Radik Yurkin?" asked Oleg.

Nobody spoke.

"Let him give his autobiography," said Ivan Turkenich.

"T-tell us your biography. . ."

Radik Yurkin rose, and staring at the window, replied in a clear, ringing voice, as though answering in class:

"I was born in the town of Krasnodon in 1928. I attended the Gorky School. . ." That was the whole of Radik Yurkin's life, and, as he felt it was very little, he added hesitantly: "But I haven't been to school since the Germans came. . ."

Again there was a silence.

"Did you have any social duties?" asked Vanya Zemnukhov.

"No, none," said Radik Yurkin, with a deep, boyish sigh.

"Do you know the aims and purposes of the Youth League?" Vanya asked again, staring at the table through his horn-rimmed glasses.

"The aim of the Youth League is to fight the German invader as long as one of them remains," said Radik Yurkin very definitely.

"Well. . . I think the boy's politically sound," said Turkenich.

"Accept him, of course," said Lyuba, who was longing with all her heart for things to go well with Radik.

"Accept him, accept him!" called the other members of the staff.

"All those in favour of accepting Comrade Radik Yurkin as a member of the Youth League signify by show of hands," said Oleg, with a broad smile, and raised his hand.

Everyone else did the same.

"Unanimous," said Oleg and rose. "C-come here. . ."

Radik paled slightly and came to the table, passing between Turkenich and Oulya Gromova, who moved their chairs to make room for him, looking at him earnestly as he approached.

"Radik!" said Oleg solemnly. "On behalf of the staff, I herewith hand you your temporary Youth League card. Cherish it as you would your personal honour. You'll pay your membership through your group of five. And when the Red Army returns, the district committee of the Youth League will exchange your temporary card for a permanent one. . ."

Radik stretched out his thin, sunburned hand and took the card. It was the same size as an ordinary membership card, made of the thick paper on which maps and plans are drawn, and folded in two. On the outside, at the top, in small, unevenly printed letters were the words: "Death to the German Invader!" A little lower down: "Leninist Communist Youth League of the U.S.S.R." Still lower, and in slightly larger letters: "Temporary Communist Youth League Card." Inside the card, on the left hand side, was Radik's name, patronymic and surname, and the date of his birth; lower down, the date of his entry into the Youth League—"6th November, 1942;" still lower, "Issued by the Communist Youth League Organization 'Young Guard' in Krasnodon. Secretary Kashuk." On the right hand side was a chart to indicate payments of membership dues.

"I'll sew it into the lining of my jacket and carry it on me all the time," said Radik barely audibly, and tucked the card away into his inner jacket pocket.

"You can go now," said Oleg.

All present congratulated Radik and shook hands with him.

Radik emerged into Sadovaya. Dusk was approaching. The rain had stopped, but a cold wind was blowing. That night Radik was to head a group consisting of three boys for a big assignment connected with the anniversary. Conscious of the card in his breast pocket, he went along the street on his way home, his face stern yet happy. On reaching the hill leading to the second crossing, by the District Executive Committee building, which now housed the Agricultural Commandant's office, Radik pursed his lips, his jaw projecting slightly, and let out a piercing whistle—just to let the Germans know that he was there, alive and kicking.

That night not only Radik Yurkin, but almost the whole organization took part in the big anniversary assignment.

"Don't forget—whoever's free, come straight to me—except the Pervomaisk people!" said Oleg.

The Pervomaisk members were having their own October holiday meeting at the Ivanikhins' home.

Now only Oleg, Turkenich, Vanya Zemnukhov and the liaison members—Nina and Olya—were left in the room. Suddenly Oleg looked excited.

"D-dear g-girls, it's t-time," he said, stammering badly. He went to the door of Nikolai Nikolayevich's room and knocked. "Aunt Marina! Time!"

Marina came out of the room, her coat on, wrapping a shawl round her head; Uncle Kolya followed her. Grandmother Vera and Elena Nikolayevna also came out of their rooms.

After putting on their overcoats, Marina, Olya and Nina left the house—they were to stand guard in the nearby streets.

It was a daring and dangerous proceeding they had in view—at such an early hour when people were still awake in the houses and walking about the streets. But how could they neglect it!

The dusk deepened. Grandmother Vera let down the blackout curtains and lighted the tiny paraffin lamp. Oleg went out to Marina in the yard. Her figure stood out against the wall of the house.

"Nobody about."

Uncle Kolya leaned out of the tiny storm window and looked around him, then dropped down the end of a wire to Oleg, who fastened it to a pole and hung it over the wire right beside the post, so that the pole and post now merged in the darkness.

Oleg, Turkenich and Vanya Zemnukhov were sitting in Uncle Kolya's room by the writing table, with pencils and paper ready. A little further away grandmother, with an inscrutable expression, was sitting upright on the bed. Beside her sat Elena Nikolayevna, leaning forward with a naive and somewhat frightened look. Their eyes were glued on the wireless set.

Only Uncle Kolya, with his sure, steady hands could tune in to any station immediately, without any noise... They came in right in the middle of an ovation... Static prevented them from hearing. The voice was not very clear, but they could hear the name that this voice pronounced. The sound of the ovation, like the noise of a seashell held to the ear filled the room and continued for a long, long time. At times it was possible to distinguish separate exclamations, even the applause. But now it quietened down, and into that silence, broken at times by the static, sounded a calm, steady, courageous voice:

"Comrades, we are today celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Revolution in our country. Twenty-five years have elapsed since the Soviet system was established in our country. We are now on the threshold of the next, twenty-sixth, year of existence of the Soviet system."

Ever since the previous November 7th, when his speech at the Red Army parade on the Red Square in Moscow had been transmitted, they had not heard this voice... But here it was, unmistakable. Yet, they could hardly believe that it was he. And Elena Nikolayevna, leaning still further forward, asked in a whisper:

"It is really he?"

"Yes... Quiet!" hissed Oleg, his pencil flashing busily.

Turkenich, his face calm and earnest, and Vanya, his glasses almost touching the paper, were writing swiftly. It was not difficult—he spoke slowly. Sometimes he would pause for a moment, and they could hear him pouring water into a glass. Nevertheless, at first all their attention was concentrated on catching every word. Then they became accustomed to the rhythm of the speech, and began to realize the amazing, almost impossible thing that was happening. "Yes, it's he... himself! And I'm here, in Krasnodon, listening and writing it down! Is it really possible?" was the thought in each one's mind.

Nobody who has not sat in the light of a paraffin lamp in cold room or dugout, when besides the raw late autumn weather outside, man himself is degraded and trampled underfoot—nobody who has not caught and held the free wave of his country with a secret wireless set and numbed fingers, can ever understand with what emotion they listened to his calm, unhurried speech...

Everything unconscious in the patriotic feelings of these people, from the sixteen-year-old boy to the old woman, the daughter of a village carpenter, all this welled up in them now, invested with the simple, direct truth of facts and figures, and inspired with a bird's eye view into the future...

It was they, these simple folks to whose lot had fallen such unimaginable suffering who were speaking to the world through him.

"The Hitlerite scoundrels... outrage and slaughter the civilian population of the occupied territories of our country, men and women, children and the aged our brothers and sisters... Only villains and scoundrels who are bereft of all honour and who have sunk to the level of brutes can commit such outrages against innocent and unarmed people... We know the men who are guilty of these outrages, the builders of this "New Order in Europe," all those upstart Governor-Generals, or just ordinary Governors, Commandants and sub-Commandants. Their names are known to tens of thousands of tormented people. Let these butchers know that they will not escape responsibility for their crimes or elude the hand of retribution of the tormented nations..."

This was their vengeance speaking, through the lips of the most humane of men....

The atmosphere of the vast world surrounding their little town, trampled into dirt under the jackboots of enemy soldiers, the mighty vibration of their own land, the heartbeat of the Moscow night entered the room and filled their hearts with the happy realization that they too, belonged to this world...

Applause greeted every slogan at the end of his speech.

"Glory to our men and women guerrilla fighters!"

"You heard that?... He said that." Uncle Kolya switched off the set and an awful silence suddenly filled the room. An instant before, it had all been there with them, and now there was nothing... The window rattled in the storm. The autumn wind whistled outside. They were sitting alone in the semi-darkness of the room, and hundreds of kilometres of suffering separated them from that world to which they had just been listening....

The night was so black that people could not see each other even if they brought their faces close together. A cold, damp wind was howling along the streets, whirling round the corners, rumbling over the rooftops, groaning in the chimneys, whistling through the telegraph wires and moaning around posts. Only people knowing the town as well as they did could find their way through the darkness and mud, and come out exactly by the doorkeeper's lodge.

Usually the night Polizei patrolled this stretch—from the Voroshilovgrad highroad to the Gorky Club. But evidently the mud and chill had driven them to look for a shelter.

The watchman's lodge was made of stone—strictly speaking, it was not a lodge but a real tower, the roof crenellated like an ancient castle; below was the office and the entrance to the pit premises. To right and left of the tower, there was a high brick wall.

They might have been specially built to do the job on hand together—broad-shouldered Sergei Levashov and Lyuba with her strong limbs, and light as a flame. Sergei crooked a knee and offered Lyuba his hand. She found it almost at once in the dark with her own and laughed. She placed her booted

foot on his knee, the next second was on his shoulders and had her hands on the stone wall, while he held her ankles firmly, to prevent her from falling. Her skirt was waving and beating round his head like a flag. She lay on her stomach over the wall, gripping it on the other side, her arms bent under her. They were not strong enough to pull Sergei up, but in this position she could hold herself steady while he took a good grasp of her waist. and working his foot against the wall, hauled himself up and with a swift, strong movement gripped the top first with one hand, then with the other. Now all that was left was for Lyuba to make room for him, and there he was beside her.

The top of the thick wall was sloping and wet, making it all the easier to slip. But Sergei stood firm, his forehead against the tower and his arms spread out against it. Then Lyuba climbed up onto his shoulders—he was certainly very strong. The crenellated top of the tower was now breast high, and she easily clambered onto it. The wind tore at her jacket and skirt until it seemed as though at any moment it would hurl her down. But the most difficult part was already done. . . .

She took out a bundle from under her coat, felt for the cord running through the border along the narrow end, without allowing it to unfold in the wind, fastened it to the flagstaff. As soon as she let it go, the wind seized it with such force that her heart missed a beat with excitement. She got out another, smaller bundle and fastened it to the very bottom of the flagstaff, so that it was inside the crenellated edge of the tower.

She let herself down the wall the same way she had come up, on Sergei's back, but reluctant to jump down into the mud, sat on the wall, with her legs dangling. Sergei jumped and then called up to her softly, stretching out his hands. She could not see him, but sensed his whereabouts from his voice. Suddenly her heart contracted, she stretched out her hands, shut her eyes tightly and jumped. She fell right into his arms, flinging her arms round his neck, and for a little while he stood there, holding her. But then she freed herself, whispered excitedly, her breath fanning his face:

"Sergei! Let's get the guitar, eh?"

"Sure! And I'll change my things—you've made me all muddy with your boots," he said happily.

"Not on your life! They can take us as we are!" And she laughed gaily.

Valya and Seryozha Tyulenin had the centre of the town—the most dangerous district. There were German sentries at the District Executive Committee building and the Labour Exchange; there were Polizei on duty at the administration offices, and the gendarmerie was beyond the hill. But the wind and darkness were in their favour. Seryozha selected the empty house of the Mad Gentleman, and while Valya stood guard on the side nearest to the District Executive Committee building, he made his way to the attic, up the rotting ladder, which had probably been standing there since the time of the Mad Gentleman and finished the job in a quarter of an hour.

Valya felt very cold, and was glad to have finished so quickly. But Seryozha bent right down to her face, and said quietly, with a laugh:

"I've got another one, let's put it on the administration!"

"And what about the Polizei?"

"And what about the fire escape?"

Sure enough, the fire escape was on the opposite side of the building from the main entrance.

"Come along," she said.

In the inky darkness they descended to the railway line and picked their way for a long time along the sleepers. They went on for so long that it seemed to Valya that they must be approaching Verkhneduvanny, but she was quite wrong. Seryozha had the eyes of a cat.

"Here we are," he said at last. "Only keep behind me, because there's a steep slope to the left, and, you can scoot right down into the Polizei school. . ."

The wind was raging among the trees in the park, it flung the branches against each other and showered icy rain drops over Valya and Seryozha. Swiftly and surely he led her from path to path, and Valya guessed that they were approaching the school—she could hear the rain beating on the roof.

She could no longer feel the trembling of the fire escape which Seryozha was mounting. Time passed, a long time, and still he did not return. Valya stood there alone in the darkness at the foot of the ladder. How terrible, how desolate this night with its wet dripping branches! And how weak, how helpless they were in this dark and terrible world, her mother and herself, Valya, and little Lucy. . . And her father? Suppose now, at this very moment, he was wandering somewhere without any shelter, half blind. . . Valya pictured to herself the vast expanse of the Donets steppe, the shattered pits, the wet towns and villages without any light, with those gendarmes. . . All at once she felt as though Seryozha would never again come down from that drumming roof, and her courage forsook her. But at that instant she felt the ladder shaking, and her face assumed a cold, grim expression.

"Here you are!" He smiled into the darkness.

She felt that he was holding out his hand to her, and she laid hers in it. It was as cold as an icicle. . . What that boy could stand—thin as he was, with leaky boots in which he had walked so many hours already through the mud, they must be full of water, and with his threadbare jacket flying open. . . She put her hands on his cheeks, and found that they too were as cold as ice.

"But you're chilled through and through," she said, without taking her hands from his face.

He said nothing for a moment, and they stood there, while the bare branches thrashed around them. Then he whispered:

"We won't wander around any more. . . Let's get away from here, over the fence. . ."

She removed her hands.

They approached Oleg's house from the side where the Saplins lived. Suddenly Seryozha seized Valya's hand, and they pressed themselves close to the wall. Valya, not understanding, raised her ear to his lips.

"Two people coming this way. They heard us and stopped too. . ." he whispered.

"You're fancying things!"

"No, they're standing still. . ."

"Let's get into the yard from here!"

But hardly had they rounded the house from the Saplins' side, when Seryozha again stopped Valya—the others had also come round from the opposite side of the house.

"It's just your imagination, I'm sure. . ."

"No, they're standing there."

The Koshevois' door opened, somebody came out and collided with the people whom Seryozha and Valya were avoiding.

"Lyuba? Why don't you come in?" came the quiet voice of Elena Nikolayevna.

"Sssh!"

"It's our own people!" said Seryozha, and seizing Valya's hand, dragged her after him.

Lyuba's quiet laughter sounded in the darkness, and she and Sergei Levashov with his guitar, and Seryozha and Valya, doubled up with laughter, seized each other's hands and ran into Koshevois' kitchen. They were so dirty, so wet and withal so happy, that Grandmother Vera threw up her bony hands protruding from her flowered sleeves and said:

"Come in, my good people! God help us!"

Never in all their lives had they been to a party like this, in an unheated room, dimly lit by a tiny paraffin lamp, in a town where the Germans had been ruling for over three months.

It was amazing how all those young people, a dozen of them, found room around one sofa. Huddling close together, craning their necks, they took turns in reading the speech aloud, and their faces were filled with the same exultation that some had experienced that day, sitting by the wireless, and others on their night excursion in the mud. The tender feelings linking some of them, seemed to be conveyed to the others; there was among them that happy sense of communion which fills youthful hearts in contact with great ideals and especially with those events most important in their lives at that moment. A happy look of friendship and glowing youth, and the assurance that everything would be well... Even Elena Nikolayevna felt young and happy among them. Old Grandmother Vera, her drawn, haggard face supported on her swarthy hand, gazed intently at the lads and girls with mingled feelings of apprehension and pity.

The young people read the speech and sat there lost in thought. A teasing expression spread over Grandmother Vera's face.

"Eh, just look at ye, lads and lasses," she said. "On a grand day like this an' all! Draw up to the table! The bottles aren't there just to be looked at! Get a drop o'something warm in ye!"

"Eh, Granny, there's nobody in the world like you, so there isn't! . . Come on, everybody, draw up!" cried Oleg.

The main thing was, not to make too much noise, and everybody found it the greatest fun to shush anyone else who raised his voice. They had decided to take turns standing guard by the house, and the best joke was to give out anybody who started to pay too much court to his neighbours or got a bit too gay.

Ordinarily, flaxen-headed Stepa Safonov could talk about anything on earth but when he had drunk a little wine, it was impossible to get him away from his favourite subject. When, with his freckled nose pearled with tiny beads of moisture, he began telling his neighbour, Nina Ivantsova, about the flamingo, everybody shushed him and immediately drove him out to stand guard. He returned just at the moment when the table was pushed aside and Sergei Levashov took up his guitar.

Sergei played in that careless style especially favoured by Russian workmen, among whom the whole attitude and particularly the face of the player expresses complete unconcern and indifference to what is going on around him. He looked neither at the dancers nor at the audience, and of course not at his instrument, in fact he did not look at anything in particular, but his hands as though of themselves drew one into th dance whether one would or not.

Sergei Levashov took up his guitar and played a Boston which had been popular before the war. Stepa Safonov rushed up to Nina and they began dancing.

In the foreign dances Lyuba-the-actress, of course, had no rival. Among the men, the best was Ivan Turkenich, tall, slender and gallant—a real officer. Lyuba danced first with him, and then with Oleg who had been considered one of the best dancers at school.

But Stepa Safonov did not release the stiff and silent Nina, danced every dance with her, while he explained in the greatest detail the difference between the plumage of the male and female flamingo and how many eggs the female lays.

Suddenly Nina blushed unbecomingly, and said:

"It's not a bit pleasant dancing with you, Stepa, because you're smaller than I am and you tread on my toes, and you keep on chattering all the time!"

With that she tore away from him and ran off.

Stepa Safonov made for Valya, but she had already started dancing with Turkenich. Then he seized on Olya Ivantsova. She was a serious, quiet girl, still more reserved than her sister, and Stepa could tell her all about the wonderful bird.

He did not forget his wounded feelings, all the same, and at the first convenient moment looked for Nina. She was dancing with Oleg, who guided her plump, sturdy figure with a quiet assurance, and an involuntary smile curved her lips, her eyes were happy, and she looked wonderfully pretty.

Grandmother Vera could contain herself no longer.

"Eh, what good's them dances to me! A lot of daft stuff they've hatched up abroad! Let's have a Gopak!"

Without twitching an eyebrow, Sergei Levashov swung into a Gopak. In two bounds Oleg had crossed the room and seized his grandmother round the waist, whereupon she, not in the least taken aback, with an unexpected lightness and agility whirled round with him, her heels rapping the floor smartly. Only the smooth swing of her skirt over the floor showed that grandmother danced with

that restraint that indicates high skill—the fiery spirit was not so much in her feet as in her arms and particularly in her face.

Nothing is so expressive of the folk spirit as national songs and dances. Oleg, with a mischievous expression which lay neither in his lips nor his eyes, but somewhere in the tilting corners of his eyebrows, his shirt open at the neck, tiny drops of perspiration starting out on his forehead, balanced his large head freely and almost motionless, squatted and flung out his legs with such skilful abandon that it was easy to see the real Ukrainian in him, as well as in his grandmother.

Pretty Marina of the white teeth and black eyes, who was wearing all her necklaces in honour of the anniversary, could not contain herself. She stamped her heels, flung out her arms as though releasing something precious, and like a whirlwind started off around Oleg. But Uncle Kolya overtook her, and Oleg again seized his grandmother round the waist, and the two couples continued to whirl, heels tapping.

"Och—ye're killing me, I'm too old for them tricks!" Grandmother gasped suddenly, and sat down, crimson, on the sofa, fanning herself with her handkerchief.

There was a general noise of movement and clapping, and the dance broke off; but Sergei Levashov, indifferent to everything and everybody, continued playing the Gopak as though everything going on round about had nothing to do with him, then suddenly checked in mid-phrase, laying his hand across the strings.

"The Ukraine's had its say!" cried Lyuba. "Sergei! Let's have our Russian!"

And before Sergei Levashov had time to start up, she was off, with such a rapping of heels that it was impossible to look away from her feet. Her head and shoulders smoothly poised, she skimmed round the circle and stopped before Seryozha Tyulenin, stamped and retreated, leaving the floor clear for him.

With that same unconcerned, indifferent expression with which Russian workmen not only play, but also dance, Seryozha casually followed Lyuba, his torn and much-mended boots tapping softly. He trod his measure and again approached Lyuba, stamped and retreated. Seizing a handkerchief, she followed him, stamped, and skimmed round the circle, her head poised delicately, occasionally vouchsafing the audience a slight, casual, barely perceptible turn, in which only the tip of her nose seemed to take part. Seryozha was after her, foot tapping foot, hands hanging carelessly, with the same indifferent expression, but with an absorption in the business in hand expressed only by the casual and rather comic efforts of his legs.

Suddenly Lyuba broke the rhythm sharply following the speeding guitar, and turned abruptly towards Seryozha, but he continued to advance, tapping his boots with such desperate energy, such hopeless passion, that scraps of dried mud flew from them.

The distinguishing feature of his dance was controlled moderation; there was boldness and daring in it, but daring hidden deep down. But as for Lyuba, the devil alone knew what tricks her plump strong legs were up to; her face flushed, the golden curls trembled and shook, looking as though they were indeed pure gold, and all the faces watching her plainly held the thought: "There's Lyuba-the-actress for you!" Only Sergei Levashov, who was in love with Lyuba, never looked at her, his face bore the accepted look of indifference to everything on earth, while his strong nervous fingers ran swiftly over the strings.

Seryozha made a wild gesture, as though flinging his cap onto the ground, and advanced resolutely on Lyuba, clapping his hands on his knees and heels in time to the music, he overtook her in the circle of spectators surrounding her, and they both halted, heels rattling. The circle laughed, applauded, and Lyuba said with sudden sadness:

"There it is, our Russian. . ."

After that she refused to dance any more, and sat beside Sergei Levashov all the time, her little white hand on his shoulder.

That day the staff of the Young Guard distributed financial aid to several families of Red Army men who were in straightened circumstances.

The Young Guard funds came not so much from the membership dues as from the sale of cigarettes, matches, linen, food of various kinds, and especially pure spirit, which they took from German lorries.

During the day, Volodya Osmukhin went to his aunt, Litvinova, and handed her a package of Soviet money. Soviet currency circulated together with German marks although at a very low rate of exchange.

"Aunt Marussya, this is for you and Kaleria Alexandrovna from our underground people," said Volodya. "Buy the children something for our big holiday. . ."

Kaleria Alexandrovna, another officer's wife, was Litvinova's neighbour. Both of them had children and both were miserably poor. The Germans had not only taken all their personal belongings, but had even carted off the greater part of their furniture.

Kaleria Alexandrovna and Aunt Marussya decided to celebrate the holiday with a supper. They bought a little coarsely-distilled vodka and baked pies of white flour filled with cabbage and potato.

At eight o'clock, Elizaveta Alexeyevna, Volodya's mother, his sister Lyudmila and Aunt Marussya with her two little daughters arrived at Kaleria Alexandrovna's apartment, where she lived with her mother and children. The young folks, saying that they had to go to see a comrade had promised to come later on. The adults drank a little, deploring the times which made it necessary for them to celebrate such a holiday stealthily. The children sang several Soviet songs almost under their breath. The parents had tears in their eyes. Lucia was very bored. Then the children were sent to bed.

It was already quite late when Zhora Arutyunyants arrived. He was very embarrassed as the light fell upon him—first, because he was smothered in mud, then because there were no other boys there, and lastly, because he had to sit beside Lucia. In his embarrassment he gulped a glass of the home-distilled vodka which Lucia brought him, and it immediately went to his head. When Volodya and

olya Orlov came, Zhora was so gloomy at even his 'comrades' arrival failed to eer him up.

They also drank. The grown-ups talked nong themselves. From fragments of nversation which the boys exchanged, ucia understood that they had not been siting.

"Where?" Volodya asked in a whisper, aning over toward Zhora across Tolya olling Thunder.

"The hospital," Zhora replied glumly. And you?"

"Our school. . ." Volodya, whose narrow ark eyes were gleaming with daring and uile, leaned over to Zhora still further and hispered excitedly in his ear.

"What? Not camouflaged?" asked Zhora, nerging for a moment from his gloom.

"No, not a bit!" said Volodya. "I'm sorry bout the school, but to the devil with it, ve'll build a new one!"

Lucia, offended that they had secrets from er, said:

"If you arrange a rendezvous, stop at home r it. All day long some boys and girls or ther have been running here and asking: s Volodya at home? Is Volodya at home?'"

Tolya Rolling Thunder, with his wild eyish curls and massive limbs, rose sudden- , and said, not quite steadily:

"Congratulations to you all on the twenty- th anniversary of the Great October Revo- ution!"

The vodka had given him courage. He was ry flushed, his eyes held a mischievous look nd he began chaffing Volodya about some mochka.

But Zhora, taking no notice of anybody, ured gloomily before him with his black menian eyes, saying:

"Of course, it's not modern, but I can under- and Pechorin. . .[1] Of course, maybe it's ot in the mood of our company. . . But in me cases they deserve just that attitude." He was silent, then added morosely: "Wo- en. . ."

Lucia rose demonstratively from her place, ent to Tolya Rolling Thunder and began nderly kissing his ear, saying: "Tolya, that ink's quite, quite gone to your head. . ."

In general, such a discord arose that Eli- veta Alexeyevna with her native brusque- ss and practical common sense said it was me to disperse.

Aunt Marussya, accustomed to looking after e house and the children, wakened at dawn. e thrust her feet into slippers, threw on her ousefrock, went to the window overlooking e waste ground. This was bounded on the ft by the children's hospital and the Voro- ilov School and to the right, on the hill, by e District Executive Committee building nd the Mad Gentleman's House. Suddenly a ght cry escaped her. . . A red flag was ying on the Voroshilov School under the avy sky with its low-lying clouds. The wind gged at it with such force that it floated out a quivering rectangle, then sank in heavy lds, the free edge waving and flapping.

A still larger red flag was flying over the Mad Gentleman's House. A big group of German soldiers and several men in civilian clothes were standing near a ladder which had been set up by the house looking at the flag. Two soldiers were on the ladder itself, one at the top, where it was supported against the roof, the other a little lower down, looking at the flag or talking with the group standing below; but for some reason or other not one of them climbed any higher or took it down. It continued to wave from this elevated point, visible to the whole town.

Aunt Marussya, forgetful of everything, threw off her slippers, thrust her feet into shoes, and just as she was, without even putting on a shawl, ran over to her neighbour.

Kaleria Alexandrovna, in her night-dress, was kneeling on the window-sill with her swollen legs, holding the frame and gazing at the flag with a look of ecstasy. Tears were streaming down her thin, sallow cheeks.

"Marussya!" she said. "Marussya! That's been done for us, for the Soviet people. They remember us, we're not forgotten. I . . . I congratulate you. . ."

And they rushed to embrace each other.

It was not only on the Mad Gentleman's House and the Voroshilov School that the red flag waved. The red flags flew from the Administration building, the former District Supply Society, over pits No. 12, No. 7—10, No. 2-B, No. 1-B, over the Pervomaisk pits and the settlement of Krasnodon.

People streamed from all parts of the town to look at them and a crowd gathered at the watchman's lodge. Gendarmes and Polizei were run off their legs, trying to disperse the people, but none of them dared remove the flags; at the foot of each one a piece of white material was fastened, bearing the laconic announcement in black letters: "Mined."

Unteroffizier Fenbong, on climbing to the top of the Voroshilov School, discovered a wire leading from the flag in through the attic window. And in the attic there actually was a mine under the rubble—not even camouflaged.

As there was not a man among either the gendarmes or the SS who knew how to take the sting out of mines, Hauptwachtmeister Brückner sent his car to the district gendarme headquarters in Rovenki for sappers. But there were none there, and the car raced to Voroshilovgrad.

It was after one o'clock when the sappers from Voroshilovgrad came to deal with the mine in the school attic, and nowhere else were any mines found.

News of the red flags raised in Krasnodon in honour of the October Revolution flew through all the Donbas towns and villages. It was impossible to conceal from Major-General Kler, field commandant of the region, the disgrace of the German gendarmes. And Hauptwachtmeister Brückner received orders to discover and apprehend this underground organization at all costs, on pain of demotion to the ranks.

Not having the faintest idea of the nature of the organization he was to apprehend, Meister Brückner acted in the same way as all gendarmes and Gestapo officers; he again threw

[1] The romantic, bitter, deeply disappointed ro of Mikhail Lermontov's novel *A Hero Our Times.*

out his "close-meshed drag-net", as Sergei Levashov had once called it, and dozens of innocent people were arrested in the town and district. But however close the mesh, not one of the Young Guard was caught in it. The Germans could not conceive that this organization consisted of boys and girls.

And indeed, it would have been hard to imagine it, if one could have seen the prominent underground worker Stepa Safonov on the worst night of arrests, his flaxen head tilted to one side, moistening his pencil in his mouth, and writing in his diary:

"At five o'clock Senka came for me to go to a party at the Golubyatniki, said there would be pretty girls there. We went, and stopped for a while. Two or three of the girls were all right, the rest rotten. . ."

On the evening of November 21st, Oleg and Uncle Kolya caught the Soviet Information Bureau's special announcement that the German front in the Serafimovich district, northwest of Stalingrad, had been pierced, all roads cut which had been supplying the German front at Stalingrad, and large numbers of prisoners taken.

On November 29th, the Soviet Information Bureau announced that our troops had come out on the eastern bank of the Don. And Ivan Turkenich, while waiting for the front to come to the Donets, began working out plans for an armed uprising in the town.

At that time there were three permanent Young Guard groups operating within the town itself and far beyond its bounds.

One of these groups worked the road between Krasnodon and Kamensk, attacking for the most part passenger cars carrying German officers. Its leader was Victor Petrov.

The second group operated on the Voroshilovgrad-Likhaya road. It attacked fuel tanks, wiped out the drivers and guard, and drained the petrol out on the ground. The leader of this group was Zhenya Moshkov, lieutenant in the Red Army, and former war prisoner.

The third group, Tyulenin's, made itself felt everywhere. It attacked German lorries carrying arms, food, or uniforms, and hunted German soldiers who had lagged behind or become separated from their comrades—even in the very town itself.

The members of the groups met for their assignments and then separated one by one. Each of them kept his arms hidden at some definite place on the steppe.

At the end of November, the Young Guard learned from their people in the villages that the Germans were driving a large herd of cattle, fifteen hundred head, into the rear from the Rostov region. The herd had already crossed the bridge over the Donets and was moving between the river and the main Kamensk-Gundorovskaya dirt road. In addition to the Ukrainian herdsmen, the cattle were accompanied by an armed guard, twelve or thirteen elderly German soldiers from the commissariat corps.

On the night after this information was received, Tyulenin's, Petrov's and Moshkov's groups, armed with rifles and tommy-guns, gathered in a wooded ravine on the bank of a stream flowing into the Northern Donets, beside a wooden bridge where the dirt road crossed the stream. Scouts reported that the herd was spending the night five kilometres away, among hay stacks which the herdsmen and soldiers were using for fodder.

A heavy, cold sleet was falling, and melting into a thick, wet, muddy gruel under their feet. The boys, their feet heavy with the mud they had dragged with them from the steppe, huddled together for warmth, and joked.

"Grand, a real holiday resort!"

Dawn came reluctantly, dark, murky and cold; it was as though the day could not rouse itself from slumber, ruminating sleepily: "Is it really worth while getting up in such weather, wouldn't it be better to go back to bed again! . . ." But a sense of duty conquered its morning sluggishness, as dawn came over the Donets land. The mixture of rain, snow and fog gave a visibility of three hundred paces.

Obeying the orders of Turkenich, who headed the combined groups, the lads, their rifles ready in their cold and numb fingers, had lain down on the right bank of the stream—the side from which the Germans were expected to approach the bridge.

Oleg, who was also taking part in the operation, and Stakhovich, whom they had taken in order to test him in battle, lay on the same bank, lower down, where the stream curved.

In the period since Stakhovich had been expelled from the staff, he had taken part in many of the Young Guard assignments and had almost re-established his good name. This was all the easier, since for the majority of the Young Guard he had never lost it.

It is a kindly attribute of human nature, innate sometimes also in people of strict principles, to be very reluctant to change towards a person, to find it awkward to do so, even when incontrovertible facts have shown that that person is not all that he appeared to be. "He'll pull up! Nobody's perfect!" people are apt to say in such cases.

Not only the rank and file members of the Young Guard, who knew nothing, but also the majority of those close to the staff, from force of habit continued to treat Stakhovich as though nothing had happened. As before, he knew all the affairs of the organization.

Oleg and Stakhovich lay silently in the bushes on the fallen leaves, watching the wet, bare, hilly surroundings, trying to penetrate the sleety fog. The sound of the lowing of hundreds of cattle in all notes and keys came to them in increasing volume, merging into a mad cacophony as though the devil were at work with bagpipes.

"They're thirsty," said Oleg softly. "They'll let them drink at the stream. That'll just suit us. . ."

"Look! Look!" said Stakhovich excitedly.

In front of them, to the left, reddish heads emerged from the fog, one, a second, a third, ten, twenty, multitudes of faces with queer thin horns growing almost straight upwards, their sharp ends curving inward. The heads were like those of ordinary cows, but even on hornless cattle the ridge of the horns can be seen, whereas on these creatures, whose bodies were hidden in the thick ground mist, the horns sprang straight from their smooth skulls. They loomed up out of the fog like chimeras.

These were probably not the leaders of the

erd, but those on the extreme left flank. rom behind came a deep lowing, and one ould sense a mighty movement of bodies stling each other, and the stamping of ousands of hoofs shaking the ground.

At that moment the sound of animated erman speech carried to Oleg and Stakhoich, approaching from in front, to the right the road. The very sound of the voices conyed that the Germans were off duty, and eling very pleased with themselves. They lashed cheerfully through the mud.

Oleg and Stakhovich, crouching low, doubld to the place where the other boys were lying.

Turkenich was standing by the slippery clay a landslide, not more than ten yards om the bridge, his tommy-gun hanging from is left arm, gazing down the road, his head rust slightly forward among the tufts of ithered grass. At his feet sat carrotty-headd Zhenya Moshkov, in a wicked mood, his mmy-gun also slung over his left arm, atching the bridge. The other lads were lying little distance from each other, diagonally ong the bank. Seryozha was the first in the ne, and Victor closed it—both of them ere also armed with tommy-guns.

Oleg and Stakhovich took up positions beween Moshkov and Tyulenin.

The casual, unhurried talk of the elderly erman soldiers already seemed to be right er their heads. Turkenich dropped to one ee and raised his tommy-gun; Moshkov lay wn, straightened his damp padded jacket, hich was twisted, and also raised his tomy-gun.

Oleg looked at the bridge with a naive, childke expression. Suddenly there was a stampg of boots on its boards, and a group of erman soldiers, in dirt-plastered greatcoats me onto the bridge, some carrying their fles slung over their shoulders, others carying them carelessly by the strap.

A tall corporal with bushy Landsknecht oustaches, walking among the soldiers, was lling them something, half turning so that ose behind him could hear. As he turned, he ced the bank where the boys were lying, and e soldiers, with the casual curiosity of eople in a strange place, also looked along e stream to the right and left of the bridge. ut as they never anticipated to see partisans ere, they saw nothing of them.

At that instant, with a sharp, deafening ttle merging into one continuous sound, urkenich's tommy-gun spoke, followed by oshkov's, and more and more, spattered by e irregular rattle of rifle fire.

Everything happened so unexpectedly, so fferently from the way Oleg had pictured it, at he was too taken aback to fire. In the rst instant he stared at everything with ildlike surprise, then with a sudden start membered that he ought to be firing too; it at that moment everything ended. Not one ldier was to be seen on the bridge; most of em had fallen, and two who had not yet arted to cross were running back along the ad. Seryozha, followed by Moshkov and en Stakhovich, jumped up onto the bank d fired after them.

Turkenich and several of the boys ran onto e bridge. One soldier was still writhing there, d him they dispatched. Then they dragged all the bodies by the feet away into the bushes so that nothing should be visible from the road, and gathered up the rifles.

The herd, which extended for several kilometres along the stream, was already drinking, some standing on the bank or with their forefeet in the water, others going right in or wading over to the opposite side. Their damp nostrils distended, they drank with a sucking and gurgling sound like several pumps at work.

In this huge herd there were ordinary draught oxen—red, grey and spotted, very slow, thick-horned, broad-chested beasts, cows of all breeds, dainty young heifers and cows in calf, their sides distended, unmilked, with swollen udders and inflamed dugs; those light roan cows with horns growing straight from their skulls that held themselves modestly aloof and large black and red spotted Flemish cattle, very dignified with their white chests, looking as though they were wearing caps and aprons.

The old cattle-drivers who seemed to have acquired the slow and leisurely ways of their charges, or perhaps during the war had become accustomed to the ups and downs of fate, paid no attention to the firing in their vicinity, but sat down in a circle on the wet ground and smoked. However, they stood up upon seeing the armed people.

The boys removed their caps respectfully and greeted them.

"Good day, comrades!" said an old man who looked like a little toadstool, with his feet turned very far out, wearing a waistcoat of undressed sheepskin over his linen shirt.

Judging by the short whip he held, instead of the long pole that the others had, he appeared to be the man in charge; evidently wishing to calm his old men, he turned to them, saying:

"Them's partisans!"

"Excuse me, good people," said Oleg, again raising his cap. "We've finished off the German guards, and we ask you to help us scatter the herd over the steppe, so that the Germans can't get them again. . ."

"H'm . . . scatter them!" said another old man, rather small and lively, after a long pause. "Them's our cattle from the Don, why'll we scatter 'em all in strange parts?"

"How can you take them back?" asked Oleg with a broad grin.

"Ye're right there, we can't take 'em back," the little old man agreed sadly.

"But if we scatter them, our folks may collect them."

"Eh, eh, dear, such a herd!" said the little old man suddenly, in mingled pride and despair, and seized his head in both hands. The boys realized what these old men were suffering, at being forced to drive this huge herd of cattle from their own parts to that foreign German land. . . The boys felt sorry for the old men and the cattle. But there was no time to waste.

"Granddad, gimme yer switch!" said Oleg, and taking the long herdsman's pole from the little old man, went to the cattle.

As the bulls and cows slaked their thirst, the herd had gradually passed over onto the far side of the stream, where part of them began to wander about, seeking remnants of

dry grass, breathing hard into the wet bare earth. Part of them were standing with a depressed air, their backs to the rain, or looking about them as though asking: where are you, herdsmen, and what are we to do now?

With surprising confidence, as though he felt himself just in his element, Oleg forced his way through the cattle, waving his arms here, slapping a belly or neck there, or bringing his long pole down with a resounding twack; he crossed the stream and made his way into the very thick of the herd. The old man with the sheepskin waistcoat came to his assistance with his switch. They were followed by the other drivers and all the lads.

Shouting, swinging their poles, they at last, with great difficulty, divided the herd into two. But it took a very long time.

"Nay, that won't do," said the old man in the sheepskin waistcoat. "Gie it 'em wi' yer tommy-guns, they'll all perish anyway."

"Eh . . . oh, hell!" Oleg frowned as though in sudden pain, and almost in the same instant a savage look crossed his face. He tore his tommy-gun from his shoulder and sent a burst into the herd.

Several bulls and cows fell, others, wounded, rushed lowing over the steppe. And the ground trembled and rumbled as all that half of the herd, maddened by the smell of powder and blood, rushed panic-stricken over the steppe. Seryozha and Zhenya Moshkov sent a round each into the second half, and they too disappeared.

The boys ran after them, and wherever several dozen showed a tendency to bunch, fired into the mass. The steppe echoed with firing, lowing, the beat of hooves, the crack of whips and the terrible and piteous shouts of human beings. Sometimes an ox, shot as it ran, would suddenly halt, slowly double up and collapse heavily. Wounded cows raised their graceful heads, lowing, and then dropped them weakly. The steppe was covered with carcasses turning crimson the black soil under the mist. . .

When the boys dispersed, each one going his own way, for a long time they would see here and there bulls and cows wandering over the steppe.

Oleg and Turkenich went together.

"Did you notice those cows with horns growing straight out from skulls, and curving inward at the tips till they almost touched?" Oleg asked excitedly. "Those are from the eastern part of the Salsk steppe, maybe even from the Astrakhan part. Those are Indian cattle. . . They've been here ever since the time of the Golden Horde. . ."

"How do you know?" Turkenich asked incredulously.

"When I was a kid my stepfather used to take me with him when he had to travel on business connected with cattle. He knew a lot about those kind of things."

"But Stakhovich did fine today!" said Turkenich.

"Ye-es," said Oleg uncertainly. "I used to travel with my stepfather in those days—just imagine the Dnieper, sunshine, and huge herds on the steppe. . . and who could have thought in those days that I . . . that we. . ." Oleg frowned again as though something hurt him, waved his hand and remained silent until he reached his home.

When the Germans tricked the first lot of people from the town into going to Germany, the remainder knowing what now was in store for them, avoided registering at the Labour Exchange.

People were rounded up at their homes and in the streets, just as Negroes were hunted through the undergrowth in olden times by slave traders.

The New Life, a newspaper published in Voroshilovgrad by the seventh department of the field commandant's office, printed in every number letters to parents from their children in exile, of an alleged free, prosperous life in Germany and of good wages.

In Krasnodon, too, occasional letters arrived from young people, for the most part in East Prussia, employed on the most menial labour—agricultural labourers or domestic servants. The letters were without the censor's stamp, and it was possible to read a great deal between the lines, but they were meagre, and dealt only with the external conditions of life. Most of the parents, however, received no letters at all.

The woman working at the post office, a Communist, explained to Oulya that letters coming from Germany were examined by a German specially sent to the post office from the gendarmerie, who knew Russian. Most of the letters he held up, threw into a table drawer which he kept locked, until a large number had accumulated, and then simply burned them.

Oulya Gromova was assigned by the Young Guard staff to lead all work against recruiting and driving away the young people. She wrote and distributed leaflets, found work in town for those threatened with deportation, or with Natalia Alexeyevna's assistance got them exempted on the pretext of poor health, and sometimes even concealed among the villages and hamlets people who had been registered and had fled.

Oulya had undertaken this work not only because it had been assigned her, but because of some inner compulsion. It may be that she felt herself to a certain extent to blame for not having been able to save Valya from her terrible fate. This feeling of guilt tormented Oulya all the more because neither she nor yet Valya's mother had received any news.

One night at the beginning of December, with the help of the woman working at the post office, the Pervomaisk boys secured the undelivered letters from the censor's drawer at night, and now here they were, lying on the table before Oulya.

Since the cold weather began, Oulya had again been living in the cottage with her family. Like the majority of the Young Guards she concealed her membership in the organization from her family.

She had a good deal of unpleasantness to put up with when her parents, fearing for her, tried to place her in a job. Her mother, lying on the bed, stared at her desperately with her large black eyes, like those of some wild bird, and then started to cry, while old Matvei Maximovich for the first time in years shouted at his daughter,

His face crimsoned right up to his bald skull ut there was something pitiful, notwithstand-ng his huge bony limbs and terrible fists, in the ast remnants of his wavy hair around that ald head, and in his utter helplessness when e tried to persuade his daughter.

Oulya told him that if her father and mother nce more reproached her with the bread she te, she would leave home.

Matvei Maximovich and Matrena Savelyev-a were taken aback—she was their favour-te. And for the first time it became evident hat old Matvei Maximovich had already ost all authority over his daughter, and he mother was too ill to insist on being eeded.

While concealing her activities, Oulya was specially careful to carry out all her house-old duties, and if she went out for long, he would give the excuse that life had be-ome so wretched and miserable that she ad to go to her friends to be cheered up. But more and more frequently she could feel er mother's sorrowful gaze on her—her nother seemed even to be abashed before er and was usually silent in her presence.

With Anatoli things were quite different; r, ever since his father's departure for the ront, Anatoli had been head of the house. His mother, Taissia Prokofyevna, and his ounger sister adored him and gave in to him n everything. So now here was Oulya sitting vith those letters before her, not in her own ouse, but at Anatoli Popov's—he had gone o see Lilya Ivanikhina at Sukhodol—inserting er long fingers into the envelopes slit by he censor, taking out letters, glancing hrough the first lines and throwing them on ie table.

First and second names, greetings to parents nd sisters in the traditional forms and hrases, touching in their simplicity, flick-red before Oulya's eyes. There were so many f them that even just to glance through them ook a long time. But among them there was o word from Valya. . . .

Oulya sat hunched up, her hands in her lap, ooking before her apathetically. . . It was ery quiet in the cottage. Taissia Prokofyev-a and Anatoli's little sister were already sleep. The tiny flame of the lamp and the visp of smoke rising from its tip rose and ell or flickered in unison with Oulya's breath-ng. The wall clock over her head counted ut the seconds with its metallic "Tick-ock . . . tick-tock. . ." The Popovs' house, ke Oulya's, stood apart among the hamlets, nd this feeling of the isolation of their life om that of other people was familiar to er from childhood, especially during autumn nd winter nights. The Popovs' house was ell built, and the faint singing of the wind, hich already held a twang of winter, could arely be heard through the shutters.

Oulya felt herself quite, quite alone in this orld filled with mysterious, uncanny sounds nd that tiny lamp-flame rising and fall-ng. . . .

Why was the world made so that you could ever give your heart to another fully and ntirely?. . Why was it, that ever since child-ood she and Valya had been one in heart nd soul, why was it that she had not left er house and her every-day cares, not re-nounced her usual life, her parents and com-rades, and not devoted all her strength to saving Valya? If she could suddenly appear there beside her, dry her tears, open for her the road to freedom?. . "Because it's impos-sible. . . Because you've given your heart to something bigger than just Valya, you've devoted it to the liberation of your own coun-try," an inner voice replied. "No, no," she told herself, "don't look for excuse, you didn't do it even when it wasn't yet too late, because you hadn't the right feeling in your heart, you were just like everybody else. . ."

"But isn't it possible to do it now?" she thought. And she lost herself in childish dreams of how she would find brave people ready to answer her call, they would over-come all obstacles, trick the German com-mandants, and there, in that terrible coun-try, Oulya would find Valya and tell her: "I have done everything, I have not spared myself in order to save you, and now you are free. . ." Ah, if only that were possi-ble. . . But it was not possible. There were no such people and she, Oulya, was quite simply too weak for it. . . No, that could only be done by a boy-friend, if Valya had had one.

But had she herself such a friend? Who would do that for her, if she found herself in such a situation? She had no such friend. And probably there were no such friends in the world. . . .

But surely somewhere in the world there existed the man whom she could love? She had never seen him, but he lived in her heart, tall, strong and good, with courageous child-like eyes. An inexpressible longing for love filled her heart. . . To close her eyes, to forget everything, to give herself entirely. . . And in her black eyes, reflecting in the smoky-yellow flickering lamp a happy and stor-my reflection of her feeling came and went. . .

Suddenly a very soft groan, almost a sob, sounded in Oulya's ears. She started, her finely-moulded nostrils trembled . . . No, it was only Anatoli's little sister mumbling in her sleep. The pile of letters lay there on the table before Oulya. A fine line of smoke rose from the lamp. The moaning of the wind was faintly audible through the shutter, and the clock was still measuring out the seconds with its "tick-tock . . . tick-tock . . ."

Oulya flushed. She herself could not have said whence came the feeling of shame—whether because she had neglected her work to lose herself in dreams, or whether it was something unspoken in them. . . And angry with herself, she began carefully examining the letters, seeking those which could be used.

Oulya stood in front of Oleg and Turkenich.

"No, if you could only read them!" she said. "It's terrible. . . Natalia Alexeyevna says that in all the Germans have driven about eight hundred people from this town. And there's a secret list being drawn up of another fifteen hundred addresses. . . No, something drastic must be done—maybe make an attack when they're taking off a group, or maybe kill that Sprik! . ."

"It wouldn't d-do any harm to kill him, but they'd only send another," said Oleg.

"Destroy the list. . . And I know how to

do it. . . We must burn down the Labour Exchange!" she added suddenly with a vengeful look.

This, one of the most fantastic undertakings of the Young Guard, was carried out by Seryozha Tyulenin and Lyuba Shevtsova, with the help of Vitya Lukyanchenko.

Winter had really set in at last, with sharp frosts at night. The hard-frozen clumps of mud and ruts left by lorries on the roads remained until the midday sun thawed them a bit.

Their meeting place was in Vitya Lukyanchenko's garden. They followed the branch railway line, then cut straight over the hills, avoiding the paths. Seryozha and Vitya were carrying a large tin of petrol and several fire-bottles. Both were armed. But Lyuba's only weapons consisted of a jar of honey, brushes and a copy of the *New Life*.

The night was so silent that the slightest sound could be heard. A stumble, a careless movement with the metal tin would betray them. And the darkness was so intense that even knowing the place as they did, they sometimes were in doubt as to their exact location. They would take a step and listen, then another, and listen again. . . .

Time went on and on, until it seemed as though they would never arrive. Strange as it might seem, when at last they heard the footsteps of the sentry at the Labour Exchange, their apprehensions grew less. The footsteps rang out sharply in the stillness, and then halted, when the sentry stood still to listen, or perhaps was simply resting in the porch.

The whole front portion and the two wings of the Labour Exchange had been assigned to the agricultural commandant's office. They still could see nothing of it, but they knew by the sound of the sentry's footsteps that they were somewhat to the side, and they continued to flank it from the left, so as to come out beside the long back wall.

Here, twenty yards from the building, Vitya Lukyanchenko stopped, so that there should be less risk of noise, while Seryozha and Lyuba crept up to the window.

Lyuba smeared the lower pane of glass with honey and pasted a sheet of newspaper to it. Seryozha cut the glass with a diamond and took it out—work demanding patience. They treated the other pane in the same way.

After this they rested. The sentry was stamping on the porch, evidently feeling chilly, and they had to wait until he started off on his beat again. They were afraid that standing on the porch, he might hear Lyuba's footsteps inside the building. The sentry returned to his beat, and Seryozha, crouching slightly, held his clasped hands out to Lyuba. Holding the window-frame, she stepped up with one foot onto Seryozha's hands, slid the other leg through the window opening, and grasping the inner wall, straddled the window-sill, the lower part of the window-frame cutting into her leg. But she had no time to think about such trifles. She slid her foot further and further down until it reached the floor. And there she was, inside.

Seryozha handed her the petrol tin.

She was inside a long time. Seryozha was terribly worried lest she should stumble against a chair or a table in the darkness.

When Lyuba appeared at the window again, she brought with her a strong smell of petrol. She smiled at Seryozha, threw her leg across the window-sill, then slid her arms and head out. Seryozha seized her under the arms and helped her down.

He remained at the window, which was now emitting a strong smell of petrol, until he reckoned that Lyuba and Vitya had got far enough away.

Then taking a bottle from his inside coat pocket, he hurled it with all his might through the gaping opening. The flash blinded him for a moment. Without waiting to throw the second, he raced down the hill towards the railway.

The sentry shouted and fired after him, and bullets whistled somewhere high over his head. The neighbourhood was illuminated with a dead kind of light, which sank again into darkness. Then suddenly a tongue of flame spurted upward, and everything was as bright as midday.

That night Oulya lay down on her bed without undressing. Every now and then she would steal softly to the window, so as not to waken anybody, and raise the blackout curtains slightly. But everything was dark. Oulya was worrying about Lyuba and Seryozha, and at times she regretted her suggestion. The night dragged endlessly. Oulya dozed, wakened, and dozed again.

Suddenly she started, awoke and dashed to the door, overturning a chair noisily. Her mother asked something in sleepy tones, but Oulya, without replying, dashed outside without even waiting to throw on a coat.

There was a glow over the town from behind the hills, a sound of scattered shots and Oulya thought she heard cries. Even at that distance, the outlines of roofs and sheds were distinctly visible in the light of the fire.

But the sight of this glow did not rouse the feelings that Oulya had expected. The ominous light and its reflection on the sheds, the shouts and firing, her mother's sleepy voice all merged in her heart into a vague feeling of alarm. She was worried about Lyuba and Seryozha, and particularly about how this might affect their organization, when the Germans were making such efforts to discover it. And she was fearful lest in all this terrible, necessary business of destruction, she might lose the greatest thing which existed in the world and which she felt in her heart. It was the first time that she had had such a feeling.

Translated by Eve Manning

(To be continued in the next number)

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THE AMATEURS OF VESSYEGONSK

The light that spread over our compound t three in the morning had the diffused and ontemplative air of a summer night in the orth. Tall, stately poplars stood calmly n dignified silence away to the right of our orch. The seine net that had been used the ay before had been thrown over the low ence to dry, but it still hung heavily as all he moisture had not evaporated. The two og-built bungalows stood on either side f the compound, as deathly silent as though hey were uninhabited. From the stable at he rear of the compound came the hoof-eats of a horse as he wandered to and fro ver the wooden floor. A string of sleepless ucks coming from the well made their way cross the bright sand, squatted down and ived their bills into the grass. The people ere still asleep.

By six o'clock that early morning movement f the sun that at first seems so rapid to the ye had already slowed down to a steady aytime rhythm, while its rays, passing rough the lacquered leaves of the poplars o longer fell on the green sward of the com-ound at a sharp angle. The birds in the oplars had begun their endless conversa-on. The white hawser of the seine was al-eady dry. The ducks had settled under the ow fence, their heads under their wings, ozing. The sound of voices came from the ouse.

Ivan Alexeyevich, the supplies' manager f the camp, came out with a bundle of blan-ets and small tents that had lain damp in he shed and threw them over a line strung etween the poplars. We wished each other ood morning as heartily as we possibly ould. This splendid and reliable man pos-essed the fine quality of being fond of people nd looking after them.

Whenever I happened to look out of the indow I always saw Ivan Alexeyevich in he compound: he would be drying sheepskin oats and woollen blankets, brushing them on n old packing case, sprinkling them with amphor and carrying them into the shed, r looking over fishing nets, or sorting out sh-hooks on the palm of his hand, the big-er ones for the seine and the smaller ones or the line—he selected those hooks that e thought most suitable for the amateur shermen. I don't know how he found time read the newspapers: he seemed to be able work the whole day without rest like the n itself. He was said to be in ill health, at he had escaped from imprisonment in ermany, but he never complained and never oke about himself.

Andrei got up and went outside to do his orning exercises: on the way he stopped to ok at the seine which, like all the Perm eople, he calls a "wormnet." When he had nished his exercises Ivan Alexeyevich took m into the shed to examine the tackle. ey spent a long time examining the xible bamboo fishing rods and the shining ckel plated reels until the damp cold of the shed drove them out into the sun again. They stood together for a long time. Andrei was eating cranberries that Ivan Alexeyevich had given him; he tore open a packet of *White Sea Canal* cigarettes and offered Ivan Alexeyevich one which the latter refused. They were joined by Colonel Smirnov and all three began to discuss the war between England and Germany.

Ivan Maximovich, one of the camp's hunters, tall, stately and with a strong square chin, came across the compound. His sporting dogs, sensing his approach, came leaping and scampering to meet him; a black nose appeared above the fence, a second later it was followed by a head with reddish hanging ears, the dog's paws scrambled down the fence to the ground soon to be followed by yet another black nose and red ears.

From the sideboard in the dining room we got a bottle of milk and some rolls that had been left there from the day before and made our breakfast from them; after breakfast we went out for a hike.

Our house stood on the outskirts of Vessyegonsk near to a pine forest. It was a hunting camp for Red Army officers who came here for the shooting and fishing or simply for a quiet holiday. Andrei and I had been there for a fortnight. On June 8th, the day we arrived, it had snowed, for the spring that year was a capricious one. After the eighth, however, all nature began to warm up in the sun and to grow before our very eyes. The shooting was already over when we arrived and the sportsmen had gone back home. Now the fishermen were beginning to arrive.

I wanted to get to know the district and in order to know a place it is always better to have some regular activity. Andrei could sit all night on the river bank, so I became a fisherman, too. Our guides were the chief hunter, Ivan Ignatievich and his assistant, Vassili Ivanovich.

Ivan Ignatievich always wore a khaki soldier's blouse—he was stockily built, cool and, in a way, stable. His sun-tanned face, emphasized by the white slip of his collar, was usually serious but when teaching a greenhorn to cast a fly his face would light up with youthful energy and as he made the cast he looked a good fifteen years younger. His laughter was jolly and sincere and countless wrinkles caused by sun and wind, heat and frost, would appear around his eyes. It was the sort of face that travellers and explorers have. He was stubborn and liked fly and spoon fishing as a sport but could appreciate the economic value of netting fish.

Vassili Ivanovich was an hereditary, professional fisherman who knew fish and their ways. Up to that spring he had been a member of a fishermen's cooperative and had been famous for his catches throughout Vessyegonsk. Vassili Ivanovich wore a jacket and black trousers stuffed into knee boots; he was

tall and thin, his face was long in shape with the pensive look of one who feels insulted. He was more lively when he was out on the river: his pensiveness disappeared; in his canvas raincoat and cap he looked more like a miner than a fisherman. His speciality was fish breeding. He only appreciated a catch of fish for its commercial value and could not understand the satisfaction derived out of catching a single fish during a whole night. He was very kind-hearted and was extraordinarily fond of his daughter.

Enemies of Vassili Ivanovich and fishing on a commercial scale were the local amateurs to whom Ivan Ignatievich introduced us. Vassili Ivanovich did not like the amateurs because most of them were sly and although they knew the "places" they never showed them to a newcomer. Most of them were bookkeepers and clerks who loved the process of fishing itself rather than the fish. They could sit the night through on the banks of the misty Kesma, walk twelve kilometres there and back, all for the sake of a couple of roach or so. Judging by my observations their chief antipathy were small boys who went fishing and such amateurs as we.

Vassili Ivanovich could not understand the jealousy of the amateurs who guarded their favourite spots on the river bank from the visitors. In their own way these amateurs were as expansive as Vassili Ivanovich in their love of nature but not of people.

Alexander Fyodorovich, a bookkeeper, a solidly built man of about 40, came into our compound one day after an all-night tussle with a cunning roach which he was carrying home, wrapped in fresh green leaves, in a basket.

"I would advise you not to fish with nets," he said. "Fishing with rod and line, that's real amateur fishing for you. Have you ever used dragon-fly larva? There's a little lake where you can catch them. Get about a hundred and then just try and catch a good roach. He's a tricky fellow, the roach. Just touches the hook with his upper lip—that's where fishing becomes an art. I know the places. I'll show them to you."

"Don't you believe him," said Vassili Ivanovich, after he had gone and in his voice we could discern an insistent and friendly desire to detract our attention from what he considered a purely amateur business, "you won't catch anything there. It's impossible to know the places nowadays. The high water has changed everything. The fish have scattered. I don't promise you a big catch, either, but we'll go over a few decent places. It's a sea now, not a river! We'll go to the lake. The gudgeon are casting their spawn now. Everything is late this year and the gudgeon are only just swimming to the banks. On the banks there are such masses of lilies-of-the-valley! Steamboats come as far as Rybinsk! This is something nobody ever heard of before."

We went everywhere: with Vassili Ivanovich along the broad Mologa past graceful white birches grown on sunken islands; with Alexander Fyodorovich along the Kesma and with Ivan Ignatievich along the Renya.

The Kesma and the Renya flow into the Mologa. In June they are calm, slow and deep as though fed by the spring waters of the Mologa.

From the high, sandy terraces behind the town one could see, beyond the dark strip of tilled gardens, a wide expanse of water as big as a lake. The Mologa had bitten deep into the banks, covered the meadows and drowned the willows and young birch trees along the riverside. The fir trees seemed to be swimming on the surface of the water, helping themselves along with their huge paws. A boat would take you across the meadows, along the forest cuttings—you could even set your nets for gudgeon in the woods. The water stood still, it was transparent but brown in colour like the waters of mossy swamplands.

Standing in their boat Vassili Ivanovich and Lyosha the motorman gathered in their nets. Away to the portside of the boat the birchwood floats appeared alongside at regular intervals. Then from the mysterious depths beneath the branches of the trees the nets brought in the catch of golden and bronze fish.

"There's the gudgeon, they're slow, lazy swimmers, and those little fellows are the fast swimmers," explained Vassili Ivanovich, triumphantly. "This isn't much of a catch. There are twelve feet of water over the old feeding grounds and the fish have scattered, there's no place for them around here to settle in and they are still wandering up and down the river. You can only fish by guesswork these days!"

"When shall we be able to fish without guessing?"

"In about five years perhaps. When the water has settled to a permanent level and the weeds begin to grow in the riverbed again . . ."

After hauling in one net we moved on to the next that was either fastened to a birch branch or simply made fast to a bush sticking out of the water.

These trees that are still under flood waters in June and in a cold year have a quite transparent look about them now stand in water that will not flow away again; the trees will end their arboreal life in this new backwater. Vassili Ivanovich calls it a lake in accordance with the new Vessyegonsk geographical terminology.

On a sandspit under the high banks of the Mologa the nets were hung out on stakes to dry in the fresh breeze. The lilies-of-the-valley were bursting into bloom on the banks. The bird-cherries were already casting their petals. The gudgeon had come into the bank to cast their spawn . . . As we went back along the wandering Mologa little white-capped waves ran to meet us; the waves beat incessantly on our starboard, smashed against the side of the boat and flowed over the gunwales. Lyosha the motorman kept a firm hold of the trembling outboard motor and sent the boat towards a lonely white building on the low deserted riverbank.

The building was the Vessyegonsk post office which a year ago had a whole town around it. This year the waters of the Mologa had been raised some twelve feet; that is why as late as June the river still crept right up to the two-storeyed white building as they used to only at the times of the highest floods.

is is the level they were to retain until e next year when the level would rise by nother twelve feet. Then the Mologa would ver the whole of the lowlands by the post fice. The town of Vessyegonsk, therefore, as being transferred to a bigger sandy ter-ce.

The houses had already been moved and the low bank of the Mologa there was a rt of plan of the town left—there were the reets, squares and paths leading to the undations of former houses and sheds. place of the houses there remained pits d cellars and ditches; the places where e sheds had stood had also been dug up: the vners had taken the well-manured top soil the upper sandy terrace where they had w settled.

The high waters of the Mologa had also ised the level of the streams that flowed to them. From a twisted pine overhanging e Renya I saw the dark, winding bed of e old river with felled logs lying across it ke bridges. The bright, sparkling currents living water flashed out from under the obstructions and made their way straight ross the river to the thin, frail branches the sunken willows. The willows, light d jolly-looking, bowed to the stream. ereabouts the homeless fish had scattered search of new domiciles.

We first went to the Renya with Ivan Igna-evich when the birch trees were just showing eir tiny glazed leaves and the buds of the rd-cherries were still tightly closed. The ad passed through a pine wood, frequently anched into two paths which again joined little farther on, in the way that makes rest roads so pleasant. The sections of pine ees gave way to clearing and birch planta-ons.

At the forester's house, sitting at a table nder the white-stemmed birches, was a an in a black wadded jacket and a wide irt unbuttoned at the chest. His elbows laced wide apart on the table allowed his nds to support a huge head with tousled lack hair. His beard was combed into two arts. His regular features and the picturesque oses he was wont to take reminded me strong-of Captain Phineas Vogt, one of Jules erne's heroes of my childhood.

"Good morning, Peter Petrov," said Ivan natievich, "we've come for gudgeon."

"Pleased to see you," answered Peter etrov, the forester of the Renya section, welcome to the Renya. There's some fried ke, I was out with a spoon-bait yesterday, nd there's still some left. One of the fish salted down. What's this I see, two colonels. nd you have nets with you. Tomorrow orning you'll be able to pull out the gud-on. Make yourself at home, Ivan Ignatie-ch, unharness the horses."

The Renya was only a few paces away: narrow path led to it which disappeared it spread onto the yellow sand. From e path I could see the calm surface of e river and the wide spring banks. The es first took in the trunks and branches the trees and then later the tiny green aves on them. Two light skiffs were swaying most imperceptibly on the dark waters below. Some barefooted boys on the green cliff above the river were making fish chowder over a fire. The forester brought spoon-baits of different shapes out of his house and showed them to Andrei and Colonel Smirnov. Ivan Ignatievich and the Colonel's son Misha were unharnessing the horses.

"This is a 'Baikal' and this is a Norwegian spoon. Look, it says 'Norge Superior'—that means 'prevoskhodny,' excellent in Russian—I know Latin well enough to read this. This is a real spoon, the best of them all. I like fishing with it: look at the mark where the pikes' teeth have seized it. It was sold to me as a foreign-made spoon but when I got it home I found the trade mark 'Lopatin, St. Petersburg' on it. Well, well . . . "

As he talked he interrupted himself with his own laughter, turned sharply from one to another and beside Ivan Ignatievich, a man of great inner dignity, he seemed to be exaggeratedly fussy although without the slightest trace of servility in his behaviour. This zealous, tousle-headed man got things going so quickly that before long we were all on the river, one with spoon-baits, another with fly gear, others with nets. Shouting to his wife to start up the samovar he ran from the river bank, taking a plank for a seat.

"Hi, you, Frenchies!" he shouted at the boys. "If you touch the skiffs I'll pull your ears off!"

At the moment the skiffs were at their mooring but Peter Petrov wanted to show how kind-hearted he was and that he was on friendly terms with the boys although my observations showed me that he was not kind-hearted at all and was quite indifferent to everybody. I later became convinced of this. He needed people, however, in order to be able to tell them about himself.

He drank heavily. In his house there was a strange absence of the most necessary household comforts. In the second "clean" room there was a huge sailcloth umbrella; in the room lived a tabby cat with her kittens and the place was thick with dust and clattered up with junk and rubbish.

He was a passionate lover of nature, worshipped the Renya and was deeply disgruntled at the fact that so many new things had spoilt her bed. He caught as much fish as he needed for one day: his daily bread was for that day only and he never thought about the future. When he caught a pike or, on rare occasions, two, with his spoon-bait he immediately returned home, fried his fish and awaited the arrival of the next amateur from the town; the amateurs, incidentally, never let him down and drinking a half litre of vodka with the newcomer he sent him off in a skiff with the "Baikal" or the "Norwegian" and then settled down to sleep on the kitchen floor, placing under his side that same wadded jacket that was constantly on his shoulders all day long.

He and his wife lived like people who were scarcely acquainted with each other. She feared her husband and hated everything that he loved; she could not take the still quivering gudgeon or pike into her hands and never ate fish. Her round face would

have had a pleasant air if it had not been so immobile. She loved her son whom her husband did not love. The son had left them to work in a factory in the town and came to see his mother on a gleaming new bicycle wearing new blue serge trousers that he took great care of and cleaned with a brush that he kept in his bicycle tool bag. The mother walked beside her son with a proud mien. Peter Petrov acted as though he did not notice them.

Peter Petrov was standing on the spit between the Renya and the lake caused by the floods.

"Colonel!" he ordered Andrei. "Go over to that birch tree. Cast the nets across the river. Wait a minute, bring the boat over here, I'll come myself!"

We rowed out to the middle of the lake and cast the nets, fastening one end to a birch tree on the bank and leaving the other end free. The net with its floats and weights sank into the water. The farther we got from the bank the deeper the floats went into the water and the white tubes of birch-bark, sunk under the water looked like gold. Then we lost sight of them altogether as the net lay on the bottom.

Suddenly a trill came from the bushes on the bank. I had not heard the nightingale for a long time. The sweet voice of the bird sang to us of our native land.

"Under no circumstances will I ever go to heaven," said the forester as he filled his pipe, "I've been living in paradise all my life. 'No-o-o', my namesake, the gate-keeper in heaven will say, 'Peter Petrov, don't make yourself at home here, you can't go to heaven twice.'" He told us how he had stood beside a willow tree for three hours once—he wanted to see a singing nightingale but did not see it.

The nightingale sang, twittered and whistled. Another answered him from the forest. I did not want to believe that Peter Petrov was a lazy-bones and a dreamer and I am glad to be able to add, on the evidence of Ivan Ignatievich, that he was a competent forester.

When the forester and Colonel Smirnov went to set their nets on the distant lake and Andrei and Misha went after pike with a spoon-bait, Ivan Ignatievich himself got down to business.

The young bird-cherries on our bank were light and transparent and gradually disappeared into the shadow of the opposite bank. On that bank, behind the tall pines but at a great distance from them the sun was going down and the tops of the pines seemed to be all on fire. The forester's wife came out to fetch in the cow and shouted that she would start the samovar going when she came back. Ivan Ignatievich thrust the ends of three fishing rods into the sand near the water and, feeling that he had come to the end of a hard, but a pleasant day's work, pushed his army cap to the back of his head and sank into deep contemplation.

Andrei and I decided to spend the shortes night of that year on the river and meet th year's longest day there. We wanted t follow all the finesse of the transition fron night to day. We were all ready to go dow to the Renya and look at its banks of whit bird-cherry blossom above the dark water when we remembered that it was Saturda and that fishermen from the town woul be coming all the time to Peter Petrov an that each of them would bring a bottle o vodka with him.

We, therefore, chose the Kesma, the happy hunting ground of Alexander Fyodorovich the roach fisherman, but we did not tel him we were going. Colonel Smirnov, a serious-minded officer, got Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* and began to "refresh his memory." Only his son, Misha, went with us. Vassya, a lad of about 14, drove us nine kilometres to the footbridge across the Kesma and promised to call for us at seven o'clock the next morning.

"Pleasant night!" he shouted to us and gravely turned his horse and drove the buggy away to the woods.

We went out on to the lake to gathe larvae. Clouds of mosquitoes buzzed over head while Andrei paddled through the water with a basket gathering in the smalle inhabitants of the water. The water beetles hard and shining like buttons, we threw back into the water and scrambled quickly to get hold of the six-legged dragon-fly larvae from amongst the weeds and throw them into a tin can.

As we went along the banks of the Kesma we suddenly came across the bookkeeper With his trousers rolled up he stood ove the water motionless, his attention fixed on his line. Farther on the boys were bathing in a sandspit, the sun flashing on their whit bodies.

We had come to Vessyegonsk for a fort night but we had another fortnight in re serve: we also wanted to go to Borovoy in Siberia where another camp like Ves syegonsk had been opened a short tim before. We had to leave in two days . . In this region, however, we felt that w were perfectly at home, that this was ou own country, and we did not want to g away.

All sorts of memories were connecte with the River Mologa. This was once th Principality of Tver and our ancestors ha travelled over the cranberry-covered swamp and the pine forests and had hunted th moose, many of whom still existed in th forests. Here the troops gathered when Dmi tri Donskoy called for armed men to figh the Tatars. Pushkin walked through forest like these and called them "transparent." This is our native land as we hear it in Chai kovsky's music It was in woods like thes that Vladimir Lenin loved to go shooting

A simple stream with low banks, birc trees in the fields and the babble of twitterin birds in the bushes—in the forest the night ingale began singing again and again, bu he never did more than begin, possibly be cause the time was late for him—all thi

minded us of the splendid people of days
ng past who loved and understood the
ice of our country.
The very future of our country mani-
sted itself in this region where nobody
as any longer astonished that man changed
e level of the waters in the rivers for his
n benefit and moved towns from place
place. Everything merged into one tre-
ndous, regular movement of a great people
eating history on earth.
"I rang Moscow today," said Andrei,
nd asked Colonel Skvortsov whether we
uld extend our stay at Vessyegonsk instead
going on to Borovoye. He said that we
rtainly could and that he was glad we
joyed this place . . . "
Thus it was decided immediately that
were to stay.
Under the steep clayey banks it grew
ld and we did not catch anything. While
was busy with the fire the fishermen were
amining the other side of the river: there
s a sandbank there that was warmly lit
the setting sun and the fish were splash-
g nearby.
As the sun went down it suddenly became
warm as if the earth had been covered
h a blanket: the mosquitoes buzzed more
istently. The sun sank to the horizon
ond a broad field in which groups of
ch, ash and firs stood apart from each
er. The birch trees, even on June 21st,
ll had only tiny young leaves: their long,
oping branches showed through the tiny
stening leaves.
Before it quite reached the horizon the
went behind a bluish-grey cloud and
osy-hued wave spread over the heavens,
aining still and growing deeper in hue
re there were scarcely visible transparent
uds. The sun went down but the grey
ud spread and rose higher in the sky,
that it seemed as though the sun would
n be out of sight. The dark cloud, however,
ved faster and a patch of blue sky showed
eath it. The sun passed into the blue
t casting a sheaf of golden rays, first
vnward and then upward. These rays
med a crown over the cloud belt. At
ven o'clock at night the sun sank behind
horizon but the glow left behind stayed
a long time—first red, then turning to
nge. The shortest night in the year had
un.
When the fishermen lit a fire above the
kened waters at the end of a long sleeve
the river, Andrei and Misha came to get
r tea. On our side of the river, not far away
n us, there was another fire, the white
ke from which spread out across the
dows. We went over to see who was fish-
here and as we got nearer the fire we saw a
p of boys sitting around it. The boys
ed us over carefully and then invited
o sit beside them.
"Tell us something," one of them suggested,
our supper was ready and we went
to eat and asked the boys to come over
ur fire.
st as Andrei and Misha were getting
y to go over to the other side of the
, the boys turned up. The bookkeeper
ander Fyodorovich, his bare feet thrust
into galoshes, came to ask for a dozen larvae from us: the roach, he said, should be biting at dawn.

"I can't stand those boys," said Alexander Fyodorovich. The boys whispered and laughed. "They're the worst hooligans going. All they ever do is frighten the fish. You spend hours watching the fish and then they go splashing and diving into the water. Crazy . . . "

Alexander Fyodorovich took his larvae in a can and walked off.

"Tell us how you got your order," one of the boys said to Andrei.

"It seems, I earned it!" said Andrei. "When I was in the Far East the staff worked well, that's all."

I protested: he ought to tell the lads in detail how and where the staff worked and what staff officers do in wartime. Promising to go to the boys' fire and talk to them in the morning, Andrei and Misha took their rods and the can of bait and walked away over the fields. I told the lads how Red Army officers lived and worked in the Far East. We had a fine talk.

After the sun went down the air becme chilly and the mosquitoes were barely visible. Still the twittering of the birds in the bushes did not cease. Beyond the swampy ground where there was a young stand of trees the nightingales were singing as though they were only just getting ready for a real song; for a long time a sweet trilling note was repeated over and over again. Beyond the river the rail screeched incessantly. Small overturned trees stood out in the dark water.

Our fishermen had already appeared on the sandspit opposite me. Misha, who had put on Andrei's long canvas coat with the hood over his head to protect himself from the mosquitoes, fishing rod in one hand and a burning brand in the other, looked like a monk as he walked along the bank. I wondered which bank would first be lit by the rays of the rising sun and, consequently, where the fish would first begin to bite. I stood with my face towards the glow left by the sunset and followed the path the sun would travel on this, the shortest of nights. It was already past midnight but it was quite light and for an hour and a half the orange belt in the sky had been moving to the right. I stood so that if I turned my head as far as possible over my left shoulder I could see the spot where the sun sank over the horizon: the spot was between the fork of a birch tree with a double trunk. Turning my head and taking in a quarter of the horizon I tried to guess the point where the sun would first appear. Above the forest directly in front of me stood the thin pale sickle of the moon—it was on the wane.

I began to watch the orange belt left behind by the sunset. It moved to the right under the edge of the grey cloud and it seemed as though the light was moving with it: the left-hand edge became paler but the right-hand turned into an orange-red, deep and intense. The cloud on the horizon spread and rose higher in the heaven, thinned out and broke into a number of small grey clouds that gradually covered

the whole sky. The narrow strip of moon rose very high. The grass underfoot became wet. Over the fields a light, infrequent mist passed very low and stood still amongst the grass. The river was smoking with mist which also came from the woods in a solid sheet.

By two o'clock the place where the new day's sun would rise was already clear; between the place where the sun set and that where it would rise there was less than one-fifth of the circle of the horizon. The red glow in the sky became brighter. At that moment I was getting water from the river and saw how the grey clouds, one on either side, became white. As I watched, the white edges turned rosy and the colour of the sky, reflected in the river, was one that is difficult to describe. It would be just as difficult to paint for the sky and the river were undergoing constant, miraculous changes. The reflection of the banks of the river with trees in their spring clothing changed into a host of rosy-gold clouds with dark edges. The haze rose up from the river and melted into the air.

The fish began to rise on our side of the river, rings spread over the water, swaying the whole bowl of the heavens. When I climbed up to the high bank that hid the rising sun from me it had already passed behind the forest and the mist amongst the trees had lifted. It spread over the tops of the trees like the wings of the parting white night.

The sun was on its way across the heavens to make its longest journey of the year.

* * *

We carried some branches of flowering bird-cherry and some perch that we had caught at dawn to town with us; there were also some roach.

There were several men sitting on a log near the kitchen: they were the gamekeepers and hunters from the distant points. Some of them came with sticks in their hands, others with rucksacks over their shoulder and during the light night they had made anything from twenty to thirty kilometres. Now they were waiting for Ivan Ignatievich to call them in. Every week the gamekeepers brought their reports to him. They were all elderly men with large families who knew how the birds live in the woods and swamps and the fish in the lakes and rivers. One of them said that a herd of moose had passed by his house during the night and had overturned a haystack; others told of the food for the pike in the rivers. It seemed to us as we listened that the population of the woods and waters was under the direct management of Ivan Ignatievich.

Vassili Ivanovich was there as well dressed in his Sunday best with a light coloured shirt and tie. He had already found time to go out to the lake with Lyosha and two newly-arrived officers and bring back a whole basket of gudgeon. The fish, the colour of old bronze, were lying on the cook's table. He was only waiting for us to return before throwing them into the frying pan. After breakfast we had a conference with Ivan Ignatievich concerning our trips for the next fortnight. He told us a lot about th habits of the moose.

Towards noon an old bee-keeper came t see Ivan Ignatievich. Ivan Ignatievich ha decided to start an apiary at the huntin camp but as this was only the beginnin he did not want to spend money on a bee keeper and was learning to run the apiar himself. The old bee-keeper came from collective farm to give Ivan Ignatievic lessons. They both put on long white smock which made them look like doctors, the nets over their heads and went out to th apiary.

The bee-hives were just under our win dows and were divided from the main com pound by a high fence. Some five officer had gathered at the window to watch th skillful old bee-keeper remove the frame and smoke out the bees while Ivan Ignatie vich with a serious face copied every move ment of his teacher. The sun was followin its even course through the heavens. Iva Alexeyevich was sitting on a packing cas near the store writing something in a book The radio was broadcasting the news bu letin.

Suddenly the broadcast stopped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo," came the voice o the announcer. "Comrade Molotov will no speak."

"Listen, comrades," said Lyova Fuch son of the chief doctor of the Kuibyshe Military Hospital. "This is something ou of the ordinary, let's listen."

"Citizens of the Soviet Union," we hear "The Soviet Government and its hea Comrade Stalin, have authorized me to mak the following statement:

"Today, at four a. m., without any clai having been presented to the Soviet Unio without a declaration of war, German troo attacked our country . . ."

That's how we learned that the war again Germany had begun.

We all stood around the loud-speaker Red Army officers who had come for the holidays and the employees of the huntin camp. Colonel Smirnov came out of his roo with his book in his hand.

As long as Comrade Molotov spoke nobo knocked at the window or called Ivan Ign tievich: bending over the hives and smoki out the bees he and the old bee-keeper plac the frames back in their places—there cou have been no greater condemnation of t treacherous German attack than that peac ful labour under the clear, warm, sunny sk

Molotov's voice ceased. The officers turn back the cuffs of their blouses and look at their watches. It was twenty minu past twelve, still time to catch the trai

"We'll have to pack up," said Andr

By this time Ivan Ignatievich had co into the big compound, had taken off t net and was wiping his perspiring face wi a handkerchief. Andrei went to meet hi We saw how Ivan Ignatievich listened him, saw a frown spread over his face. Th he turned to Ivan Alexeyevich who came h rying up and shouted a curse such as we h never heard him use before.

Ivan Ignatievich's wife, a middle-ag but still beautiful, kind and tender-heart

woman, hurried out into the compound to meet him.

"Paulina," he said, "ask Vassili Ivanovich to come here. I am going to hand the place over to Ivan Alexeyevich. Get my suitcase ready," he looked at his wife's troubled eyes and at the spots on her cheeks, placed his hands on her shoulder and walked away to the house with her.

On June 22nd, in the early morning, on the most magnificent day of the year, a terrible threat overhung our fields, woods, rivers and lakes, over our people and over everything they loved and cared for, over our past, present and future.

We had not had time to judge the full extent of the menace when the bookkeeper, Olga Alexeyevna, ran out of the office and looking at me with her big, troubled, sorrowful eyes, said:

"I am terribly afraid for my son!"

3

Near the porch, where the road makes a wide loop in the green grass, many things happened. Officers came here from the station, their suitcases were unloaded from the carts, here the saddle horses were brought for those who were going off to shoot or fish, here nets, sheepskin coats and tents were brought out of the storeroom; here the officers came out in the morning to take a look at the weather, stood about and talked with their comrades. The road at this point, therefore, was trodden down hard.

People also left from this point.

Probably for the first time since the hunting camp had been in existence Ivan Alexeyevich did not have to hand out the food for the next day. There was no need to count the few people who would remain. And the officers who had arrived here and who came out calmly and merrily in the early morning to breathe and stretch themselves in the fresh air, who ate whatever they were given with the greatest appetite, who praised the Vessyegonsk cranberries as big as cherries, and who weighed themselves every week on the scales in Ivan Alexeyevich's store—they would not require his care any longer, they were going away.

Ivan Ignatievich was going—he was a reservist in the first category, and Vassili Ivanovich and the healthy-looking, round faced motorman, Lyosha.

Today nature had not yesterday's calm morning beauty: the whole foliage of the poplars was trembling, the green branches were shaking in the wind showing the whitish undersides of the leaves. The tents hung up to dry were blown up like sails. In the store-room Lyosha was helping Ivan Alexeyevich stack packing cases. In his movements one could see a troubled hurriedness.

Ivan Ignatievich came out into the compound in his khaki blouse with his damp hair combed straight back.

"I haven't been to bed yet," he said greeting us. "I've been handing over the camp. Lyosha!" he shouted, "how are you getting on? Will you have time to go for the nets?"

"I'm afraid no, Ivan Ignatievich," he answered, "I have to report at nine o'clock."

"All right, then, we'll manage it ourselves. How's mother?"

"Mother's already baked cakes for me to take along," smiled Lyosha. "She's very busy."

We had seen mother in our compound on several occasions: she came to sort out the cranberries that had been spread on a canvas sheet, to pick out the green leaves and the brown, spoiled berries—a little elderly woman in a dark kerchief with a pleasant look and rapidly moving agile hands. After a good catch, one day Vassili Ivanovich picked out some of the best fish and told Lyosha to take them to his mother. "My mother always has plenty of fish," he laughed, "I catch them for her." Lyosha had served as a signaller in the Far East, had been in charge of a radio station at Spassk and when he returned home had begun to work as a motorman. His motor was always in perfect order and Lyosha himself was smart and attentive: "Lyosha's a disciplined lad," the officers used to say.

Everything was simple. No unnecessary talk. Since yesterday there had been no time for conversation, but the general tenseness of thoughts could be felt in the work of the people who were leaving as though they had come to understand each other better.

All those whom we had got to know so well during this time seemed so near and dear to each other. We had known this, but somehow had not thought of it before. It was now clear to everybody what was dear to him in life and what he would now have to part with. We saw them now more fully and got to know them all better.

Lyosha had his old mother, Vassili Ivanovich his daughter on whom he lavished everything, Ivan Ignatievich his wife, Paulina Vassilievna . . .

She moved about the compound, a tall woman in a simple white dress with black hair, slightly touched with grey, curling on her neck. The daughter of a famous hunter from the Zavidovsky Reserve, she knew all the habits of animals, had gone a-hunting with her father and loved fishing. At our camp she never had time to go to the river, she helped with everything—helped the cook with the cooking, the housekeeper with her work and even the charwoman with her cleaning. Today, however, she would not start on anything, her eyes were troubled and shining.

"Come on inside, I'll show him to you," she said and leading us into her room got out a photograph of Ivan Ignatievich in army uniform in which he looked younger and, as she thought, more handsome. We did not know him at that time of his life but she wanted us to know him as well as she did.

"This," she said showing us a photograph of a handsome dark-eyed Red Army man, "is the boy Ivan Ignatievich and I have brought up. Ivan Ignatievich also has two sons from his first wife, both lieutenants. But this lad!" she held the photograph farther away from her so that she could better admire it. Her eyes became moist, "This one is still a Red Army man. Our little Tatar, our own son . . . our little Tatar . . ."

For the last time we went out on the Mologa

without Lyosha. That was early in the morning of June 23rd.

From the sandy terrace the dark blue Mologa could be seen, its surface covered with the white caps of wavelets running diagonally across the water. Near the far bank a steamer was hauling two broad barges upstream. A fresh, clean breeze brought with it the smell of flowering river banks.

"Keep the head of the boat on to the waves," said an old game-keeper, bringing the outboard motor from the shed.

"And give us some oars in case they're needed," answered Vassili Ivanovich.

The high waves struck the side of the boat covering us with spray and then rushed hissing to the low banks. The game-keeper pushed off the boat and wished us a pleasant journey.

How fondly we looked at the green banks of the Mologa! When we dried the nets we built a huge fire. A game-keeper from Lake Dorozhev, an elderly man with sharp features and a long nose sat by our fire sighing all the time. The perch were big in his lake and as many as seventy of them were caught with rod and line in one day, in the swamps around there was never time to gather in all the cranberries—and who would get them now? Perhaps neither fish nor cranberries would be needed any more? The people would not have time for anything except the gathering of the harvest and looking after the cattle.

"If there's no time to catch with lines they will be caught with a net," said Vassili Ivanovich. "Only see that you breed the perch for us until we come home again."

"Will our 'points' remain until then?" asked the game-keeper. "I'll probably go to the war myself. I'm an old artillery man . . ."

"Your wife will remain in your place. The children are growing up, they can help."

"But will there be any need for the 'points'?"

"Why not? Why should we start it all over again when once the camp has been got properly going? We'll turn it into a sanatorium."

"Who'll be in command? Ivan Ignatievich has to go immediately, you too, Vassili Ivanovich. Ivan Alexeyevich is a good fellow but he is not a hunter by profession; when Ivan Ignatievich goes there'll be nobody to look after the place. There's a man that knows his job!"

Ivan Ignatievich was a man that not only knew. We realized that he could foresee the future of the place and properly understood the beauty of the new Russian landscape, understood that the new features were not destroying anything but, on the contrary, were giving it breadth and expression. A few days before he had taken us to see the site for a new hunting lodge. On the high bank of the Mologa he favoured a broad promontory between two deep gullies.

When the nets had been dried and stowed in the stern of the boat, and Andrei, taking Lyosha's place, had the motor running, I asked how such a huge undertaking, so many hunting "points" could be managed without Ivan Ignatievich.

"Of course the game-keeper was right," answered Andrei. "It will be hard to replace Ivan Ignatievich, but think how good it will be for the Red Army men to have him for an officer. He's like a father to people in general . . ."

We all agreed that Andrei was right.

* * *

Whenever I want to recall the last day at Vessyegonsk I see before me the porch, the wide compound covered in short grass that the geese love to nibble and the poplar trees to the right. The sun is already going down. Ivan Ignatievich is sitting on the banister looking with sad eyes at the officers around him—some are sitting on the steps, others have brought a long garden bench and placed it on the road.

One of the newly arrived officers, a young lieutenant with a round sunburnt face and blue eyes said:

"We've scarcely had time to look round and . . ."

"Yes," said the colonel, seriously. "Hannibal is at the gates! We mustn't forget that even for a moment. D'you remember what Lenin said in 1918?"

"We've a difficult war ahead of us," said the captain.

"The German army always did break down under the stubbornness of the Russians, that's what you have to remember," said the colonel, stressing the "always."

"That's why they wanted to take us by surprise," said the lieutenant. "The boys on the frontier will be having a hard time of it."

The cook, an old man, joined us.

"An old woman on the market said the Germans began the war on the same day as the French in 1812," he said thoughtfully. "The Germans began the war when the moon was on the wane. Everybody knows that you can't start something when the moon's on the wane. You young people may laugh, but it's true," he looked at Colonel Smirnov who was laughing. "Peter the Great had a general named Bruce who made a calendar showing when to do, what, even when to cut your nails or take a bath or have love affairs. Even more important were such things as wars. Peter never began anything without Bruce's calendar."

"So much the better," said the colonel, "if Hitler started ringing the bell without looking at the Church calendar." Everybody laughed.

The old cook turned to Ivan Alexeyevich. "I came to you for some cranberries," he said. "It'll only take a moment and I'll have some fruit water for the officers to take with them. It's hot and they'll want to drink. They can take it in bottles, it's better than the mineral waters on the station!"

"Don't worry about us, dad, we've got to get used to everything," said Lyova Fuchs, who had taken his final examinations at college at the beginning of June and had only just begun his holiday. "Our business now is war and war means a tough life," and he got up and went to his room.

"It's hard," said Ivan Alexeyevich, "for a man to leave his usual work. Take, for instance, Ivan Ignatievich. Yesterday Andrei Konstantinovich and I told him the war had begun and he couldn't find a word to say: simply cursed. It is bad for a man to

ave to leave his work on account of the scists."

"But it's a great thing to liberate the world om them," the captain concluded. "It's pity our mothers have to suffer the sorrows war. My mother knows nothing about the my. I remember when I graduated from e regimental school as a sergeant I sent letter and asked her to send me twenty-four iangles (before epaulettes were introduced Red Army sergeant wore three enamelled iangles on his collar tabs. *Trans.*). I receiv- a big parcel, opened it and there I found venty draughtsman's set-squares! 'Oh, mam- a,' I thought. 'You're a real civilian.' he officers all laughed, even I laughed. ow I am sorry for her."

At that moment we heard a violin accom- nied by an orchestra: Lyova had switched the wireless.

. . . We all recognized Chaikovsky's music, ly he could remind us so forcibly of our resent surroundings. Everybody was silent, stening, and no doubt seeing some picture his native place conjured up by the music. efore me I could see the broad blue Mologa, ith the little grey waves running across . . . The lilies-of-the-valley were in bloom the high bank, the nets were drying on akes, the wind had twisted them into loops... Russian song was being sung on a hot day a village street and gradually moved far- er away as though we ourselves, going way, were looking back at our own house d behind us we could hear the dying oes . . .

The lieutenant who was sitting next to sighed and said:

"That's how they make merry in our vil- ge at harvest time," and I realized that he, e myself, had seen some of his beloved ces.

This, no doubt, is how our native land peared to every one of us, showing us that ich we loved best. We all felt how dear us were these woods of conifers, and these ollen rivers and we knew that we had not quired these things so simply and that they ght all be taken from us. No! our people re closely bound up with these open forest ades and damp fields and when we build ns and raise the level of the waters in our ers we are building and extending our y of life in accordance with its own laws, are trying to be just and worthy owners this huge land which the eye cannot see m end to end. We had a feeling of firm nviction that nobody could pull our people by the roots from their native soil.

We sat thus in silence and watched tall, n Ivan Alexeyevich and the short stout k in his white smock walk over to the e-room.

* * *

uitcases, pillows and rucksacks had n loaded onto the porch. The cart full. The horse neighed in the stable ond the compound. A coachman drove a round from behind the cookhouse build- jumped down before he reached the porch, and threw down the reins. The horse, a glossy roan, stopped. The coachman tightened her girth, pulled a lock of red hair onto the white star on her forehead, climbed on- to the seat again, drove up to the porch and halted behind the cart.

Ivan Ignatievich and Paulina Vassilievna came out of the office, ready to leave. Colonel Smirnov, the lieutenant, Lyova Fuchs and the captain came down the steps one behind the other. Misha was already seated on the cart.

"Comrades," said Ivan Ignatievich, "our horses are out at one of the farthest 'points': I sent them there to fatten up before the grass is mown for the hay. I suggest you put all your things on the cart and walk to the station."

We walked, the whole Army Hunting Camp—Ivan Ignatievich and his wife, Vassili Ivanovich with his daughter and all the offi- cers that were there on holiday. Some of the camp's hunters were going away as well, the others insisted on seeing us off. Along the light, sandy streets of Vessyegonsk we walked to the station under a hot sun, the dry sand scattered under our feet.

We had been living with these people for a fortnight. Some traits of their characters had become known to us during this period, oth- ers had remained hidden from us. Good, friend- ly relations, however, had been established between us. These people spent their days in looking after us but they did not condemn us because we had good things to eat, rode out to hunt and fish and slept soundly in clean, cool rooms.

When one of the officers visiting the camp said that we lived like landlords on their setates we asked him not to say anything like that in front of Ivan Ignatievich or his assist- ants: the comparison, I thought, would be an insult to the workers of the Army Hunting Camp. We were here amongst our own people, the same working people as we ourselves were, and all the time we felt our native land all around us. That is why our holiday was complete.

At first the mass of impressions that we who were tired from our winter's work got only made us speak about them: but later we felt that something strong and powerful was form- ing inside us and was getting ready to ex- press itself. We felt a new hunger for life: we were excited, we became more observant, we were happy—we had rested!

This is how the war found us. In face of the severe trial that had suddenly confronted us we took ourselves in hand, we mobilized in spirit all that inviolable reserve of every- thing that our country had given us in the days of our youth and in riper years and . . . we set out on a long and difficult journey.

We all came out of our house together— all those who had come here to rest and to work—and entered a new and very difficult phase of life which we accepted as temporary and inevitable. During the day that had passed since the war had begun every one of us, no doutb, had already found his place.

In this way we walked to Vessyegonsk sta- tion and in the distance beyond the pine forests we saw the smoke of our train.

Translated by George Hanna

LEV SLAVIN

THE LAST DAYS OF THE FASCIST EMPIRE

I. BERLIN FROM WITHIN

The death of the fascist empire was bereft of all greatness. It can never serve as an inspiration for tragic drama. There was nothing lofty about it, it was not a tragedy, but only blood and hysterics. Hitler Germany died as she had lived, wallowing in lies, blood and filth.

After four years on the fighting fronts, fortune favoured me. I witnessed the end in Berlin. The story of the last eight days of Hitler's Berlin, based on personal observation, interrogation of eye-witnesses and documentary data gave me some idea of the last moments of the fascist regime.

What did really happen in the German capital when the fighting was in progress on its approaches?

Berlin was subdivided into eight defense zones; the centre known as *The Citadel*, formed the ninth zone. The Germans regarded it as impregnable. Here, in the vicinity of the government buildings and the Tiergarten, was the brain of fascist Berlin.

Each of the defense zones was garrisoned by some 24,000 troops and headed by a commander hand-picked by Hitler himself from among the officers he most trusted. Zone A, for instance, was under the command of a certain Fenger, a favourite of Hitler's, whom the latter had raised from private to lieutenant-colonel—and this certainly not because of his military merits. But since it was clear that protestations of loyalty alone were not sufficient to defend Berlin and that combat experience too was required, a man far removed from Hitler's immediate environment, General of Artillery Weidling was appointed commander of Berlin's defense a few days before the fall of the city.

It must be said, of course, that General Helmuth Weidling's experience on the Eastern Front was somewhat one-sided, though generally speaking he was a seasoned commander. During the World War I he captained a Zeppelin. In Poland in 1939 he commanded an artillery regiment. In the French campaign of 1940 he was chief of artillery of an army corps. After that he fought in the Balkans. As for his record on the Eastern Front, in 1941-1942, he retreated from Moscow; in 1943, as divisional commander he retreated from the Kursk bulge; in 1944, as general officer commanding the Ninth Army, he ran from Bobruisk leaving his shattered troops in a trap; in 1945, now demoted to corps commander, he retreated from East Prussia, and later, in April to be exact, he and his men retreated from the Oder, where strictly speaking the Battle of Berlin began. This was the man who became the last defender of the German capital.

In this capacity General Weidling reported to Hitler and his ministers daily. Every evening he went down into the many-storied comfortable shelter deep under the New Reich Chancellery, whence the fascist leaders still tried to govern an empire that had actually ceased to exist. What a contrast! Men who only a short time before had held Europe in the hollow of their hand, now ruled over the few remaining underground shelters surrounded by the smouldering ruins of Berlin. But from Weidling's story you could gather that despite this, Hitler in his underground rat trap was as much a megalomaniac and braggart as ever. He continued issuing orders even after there was no one to carry them out. He was a potentate in a vacuum.

That tall, blond old man Weidling, with the stiff bearing so typical of many Germans, told his story in a solemn and monotonous voice, barely evincing a sign of animation or emotion even when recounting the most dramatic moments. However, he displayed a bit more common sense than the others when he realized on May 3rd that the only way left was to surrender.

To me General Weidling's testimony was all the more interesting since I had been right on the spot on that eventful day, entering the Imperial Chancellery immediately after it had been taken by our troops. Even through the fresh traces of battle there was no mistaking the panic that had seized the defenders of Germany's central administrative building. Hitler's private library too had been put to an unexpected use: volumes of books were piled high in the broad chancellery windows in lieu of sand bags. They all had Hitler's *Ex Libris* on them and the authors' dedications to the Führer. Judging by the number of grenade-mangled copies of *Mein Kampf* that littered the premises, Hitler's favourite author was Hitler. In the shell-pocked chancellery garden, amidst lilacs that had survived the holocaust, lay bodies of suicides—members of the headquarters staff, SS-men and gestapo-men who took this way out. We dubbed the garden *Suicide Park.*

To return to General Weidling, he reached the height of his career just a bit too late. He was appointed general officer commanding Berlin's defenses on April 24th, eight days before the city fell. He himself says that he accepted the appointment with reluctance. This was so not only because he was well acquainted with the caprices of the conceited tyrant or because the appointment was part of the panicky search for "reliable people," but mainly as a veteran soldier he knew that Berlin's position was hopeless.

Yet Weidling did not have the courage to refuse. He knew well enough how quick Hitler was with reprisals, and he had not forgo

ten the trouble he had been in the year before when Hitler ordered him to be shot after the Ninth Army's disaster at Bobruisk. People had been shot for less than that, particularly towards the end, sometimes even for simply disagreeing with Hitler on questions of tactics.

Other generals taken prisoner said on this score: "As long as the German army was winning, Hitler took the credit for its victories but when it began to suffer defeat after defeat, Hitler ascribed the setbacks to the generals. And what was there that we could do? Hitler who had concentrated supreme military authority in his own hands, paralyzed the army. An army commander was powerless to transfer even a battalion from one sector to another without Hitler's personal permission. . ."

Soon after, Hitler reprieved General Weidling, nevertheless reference to being shot cropped up again and again in the deposition he made to his captors. It looked very much as if the threat of being shot hovered constantly over Hitler's followers. The executioners too were always at hand. They were the SS-men of Hitler's bodyguard.

2

I saw these gentlemen too on that memorable May 2nd. Knowing that there were two ways of getting from the Chancellery into the notorious underground shelter where the Hitlerite leaders had taken cover ever since the war began—a staircase and an elevator—I started on my search for them. They were impossible to find, however, for the day before our shells had destroyed the stairs and the elevator shaft. Some Berliners came to my aid and told me of another entrance leading direct to the shelters straight from the street. Following their instructions I walked up the Wilhelmstrasse, flanked the Imperial Chancellery from the left, and found myself at the entrance to the catacombs. Ordinarily the entrance had been covered by an enormous slab of armor plate, but now it was raised revealing a passageway. By some special mechanism it could be lowered during air raids.

A steep staircase led down into a long tiled corridor. The place was flooded with light and water dripped from faucets along the walls. This was a strange sight for demolished Berlin, the shelter was not dependent on the regular supply of electricity or water. It had its own power plant, water supply system and radio station, all of which were in perfect order.

Along the entire length of the corridor wounded SS-men of Hitler's bodyguard lay on cots, stretchers or simply on the floor, leaving only a narrow strip in the centre. They glowered at the Red Army officers passing through. They had not had a shave for days and the thick stubble enhanced the ferocity of their features, and I must say that I had never seen a gallery of more repulsive looking creatures. This was a hospital set up for Hitler's guardsmen wounded during the fighting around the Chancellery.

Some of the wounded groaned, but I must admit that I felt no pity for them. German doctors and nurses glided up and down the corridor with bandages and medicines. Down in the lower depths of the shelter whither many of the SS-men had fled our troops were still smoking them out.

Finally I ran into the Soviet officer in charge, a captain from the city commandant's administration. He invited me into his office, which only that morning had still belonged to Göbbels.

"Will you have some wine?" the captain asked me. But he said it in a way that prompted me to ask:

"What have you, something special?"

"Nothing extraordinary, only it will be served by Hitler's personal barman. You see, they have all remained behind."

True enough, a few minutes later a lean, slovenly looking old man in a smoking-jacket poured out some vile German vermouth. His mask-like face had the docile mien of the professional German lackey.

I told the captain I wanted to go through the hospital and talk with the SS-men there.

"I wouldn't advise you to do that," he said. "You already had a glimpse of them; you know they run into several hundred, while I," here the captain leaned toward me and whispered confidentially, "have only six men. Some bastard might very well stick you without my knowing a thing about it."

Nevertheless I went. No one tried to "stick" me. The Nazis looked at me with undisguised hatred, but they talked. From them I learned about life in Hitler's subterranean residence which I shall recount further on.

3

The day he received his appointment, General Weidling reported to Hitler. That was at 5.00 P. M. on April 24th. Hitler's suite was located in the same subterranean premises under a massive protective covering of reinforced concrete.

When Weidling entered he found himself facing the same narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped man with the low forehead, and heavy loose-hanging jaw with the same grimacing face he had seen during his previous visit to Hitler a year before. Yes, it was Hitler, and yet. . .

"I was shocked by his appearance," Weidling says. "The change that had taken place in him was staggering. It was the wreck of a man that stood before me. His head jerked and his hands trembled while his voice was barely audible. After that I came to him every evening to report on the situation on the Berlin front. And every day Hitler looked worse and worse. . ."

Berlin surrendered on May 2nd. But already on the day before our forces had penetrated deep into the city, On that memorable day I saw our tommy-gunners take one of the recruiting stations and with it a whole yardful of Volksturm conscripts. Though the fighting was already going on all around, the conscripts were obediently going through the formalities of enlistment and receiving rifles and Faust-grenades which they regarded with obvious misgivings, One of the men sat on his haunches in front of a huge garbage bin clumsily painting Göbbels'slogan "*Berlin bleibt deutsch*" on it. The oldest of these men was 64 and the youngest 42, the men in their forties being ironically dubbed "youngsters".

by the others. This was the human material Göbbels used to build up the Volksturm battalions that armed with ten to fifteen machine-guns and Faust-grenades took their places behind barricades which were brick-laden street cars or simply wooden frames filled with sand and topped off with wagons loaded with earth. Frequently these barricades were reinforced with steel plates. The hopes Göbbels placed on these men and these defenses collapsed soon enough, however, for the Volksturm men took to their heels the moment they encountered serious opposition. The regular soldiers, however, were of another mettle and put up a furious resistance. But they had been bled white already during the fighting on the approaches to Berlin.

In the yard of the recruiting station I picked up a copy of the Berlin *Morgenpost* with that day's dateline. By that time the newspaper had dwindled down to a mere two-page sheet. Scanning it I found a panicky appeal of Hitler's which was full of the threats of execution for which he had such a predilection.

"Anyone advocating measures that weaken resistance or simply expressing agreement with them is a traitor," I read. "He is to be summarily shot or sent to the gallows. This also applies to those who claim that such measures have been initiated by the Gauleiter of Berlin, Reichsminister Doctor Göbbels, or even by the Führer himself. . . . Adolf Hitler."

The residents of Berlin with whom I talked said that this exhortation—one of the last Hitler put out—completely confused the population. Now no one knew which orders issued by the authorities were to be obeyed and which not. Mutual distrust and suspicion were rife. Rumours were spread that Hitler was not Hitler at all, but his double. Fear and panic were now the masters of beleaguered Berlin.

In the same issue of the *Morgenpost* Göbbels wrote:

"I can state that a resolute fighting spirit prevails in Berlin and that there is not a trace of sentiments favouring surrender. The capital will never hoist the white flags!"

And yet at the very same time many Berliners were secretly cutting up their linen into tokens of surrender and the demand for them was particularly great.

Despite the optimism of the official pronouncements, the Hitlerite leaders were desperate. Hitler himself, according to people who saw him during these final days, hysterically swung from one extreme to another. From utter hopelessness he would soar to fantastic visions of victory, only to descend again to the same minor key the very next minute.

On one of these gloomy days, April 22nd, he announced in his usual declamatory manner, which he was unable to discard even now that the empire was doomed, that he had made up his mind to fall at the threshold of the Imperial Chancellery. This he said in the presence of Fieldmarshal Keitel, Colonel General Jodl and Martin Borman, Hess' deputy, an intimate of Hitler's, chief of the latter's bodyguard and the man directly in charge of the National Socialist Party. It was also heard by an obscure young stenographer by the name of Gerhard Gesell; as a matter of fact, it was he who subsequently told the story of this exchange of opinions in Hitler's headquarters, which by that time had settled in its subterranean premises under the Chancellery.

In reply to this outburst Keitel hinted that it ran counter to the plans Hitler himself had confirmed the day before, and said that he looked to the silent Jodl for support. The latter reluctantly mumbled that General Wenk's Twelfth Army and some other units might still be able to improve the situation at Berlin.

Nevertheless Hitler, abandoning himself wholly to the tragic role he had chosen for the day, repeated with even greater pathos that he was destined to perish in dying Berlin in order to save the honour of the German nation. And as he did so he looked significantly at the men around him.

"My job is to lead troops, not to be killed in a maze of ruins," said Jodl bluntly, leaving the room and making straight for Gatow where a four-engined Condor stood ready to take off.

Hitler watched him go in pained surprise. So this was Jodl, Alfred Jodl who owed him everything, the man whom he had promoted from major to colonel general as a reward for his notorious denunciation in 1938 of Rundstedt, Brauchitsch, Leeb, Bock, List, Kleist and other dissenting generals on whose secret conference he had spied?

"Get out by plane, all of you!" Hitler said after an awkward pause. At this stage Keitel too hit the high key in which the conversation was being conducted.

"Mein Führer!" he cried. "Were we to leave you now, we could never face our own wives and children gain!"

"Go," repeated Hitler. "Go quickly! The Russians may be here in a week, in two days, or maybe within ten minutes. Go to South Germany. Set up a government there. I appoint Göring my deputy."

This, however, did not prevent the erratic Hitler from ordering Göring's arrest shortly afterwards.

Keitel did not have to be asked twice. He left the shelter and, apparently deciding that he would be able to make it up with his wife and children after all, drove to the airdrome, urging his driver to make it as fast as he could.

Soon after Keitel, the unobtrusive stenographer Gesell also slipped out. Clutching his folders and papers tightly under his arm he dashed down the Hermann Göring Strasse for Gatow. When Russian shells screamed overhead he threw himself down on the pavement to wait for the explosion, and then again sped along the deserted streets for all he was worth. He knew that no more planes would take off from Gatow, and making the last desperate effort he reached the plane and clambered aboard. The gigantic Condor packed with Hitler's henchmen climbed into the Berlin sky. They managed to clear the Russian positions and soon came down safely at Berchtesgaden. Here the Americans arrested the passengers.

On April 25th Hitler was the irrepressible
ptimist again. When General Weidling
ported to him on the situation—and the
port was gloomy indeed—he listened in
lence, eyes glued to the reinforced concrete
iling which seemed to have a soothing effect
him. One can imagine Weidling's surprise
hen Hitler began to contradict him, for
itler could not have been unaware that the
y before Marshal Zhukov's forces had taken
e radiocentre of Nauen, located West of
erlin, with all its equipment and personnel;
at the Red Army troops had penetrated
to Berlin proper and taken Pankow in
ie northern part of the city, Tegel in the
estern, and the Silesian station in the eastern;
at on that very day Marshal Zhukov's
rces had cut all the roads leading west from
erlin and contacted the troops of the First
krainian Front northwest of Potsdam, and
at Berlin had thus been completely cut off.
In reply to Weidling's statements proving
nclusively that the situation was hopeless,
itler began shouting disjointedly, all the
ile jabbing at the map with a shaking
iger:

"The situation will improve soon," he
outed. "The Ninth Army will move to
erlin and hit back at the Russians. I have
dered it to do so. General Wenk's Twelfth
ssault Army will also be brought up from
e West. It's going to strike at the Russians'
uthern flank. That too I've ordered. Besides
eneral Steiner's forces will come down from
e North—a blow at the northern flank of
e Russians. You will see, General, everything
going to turn in our favour. . ."

"I listened to Hitler with horror," Weid-
g recalled this meeting. "The impossibility
his plans was clear to me. The Ninth Army
s surrounded and was waging a desperate
uggle. Wenk's army was bled white. I did
t believe Steiner had any troops to speak
. . ."

If anything, General Weidling underestimat-
the gravity o the position. At that time,
Steiner's army only the headquarters
nained—it was located North of Berlin—
this army had been utterly smashed way
ck in March by the troops of the First
lorussian Front. As for the Twelfth As-
ult Army, it surrendered to the American
ces that very day, while the Ninth Army,
pped, was being finished off by our troops.
tler had been issuing orders to phantoms.
The fascists were true to themselves. Every
ng around them had changed; still they
ng to their established ways: still they
tinued to lie to one another and to them-
ves and the people, and to struggle for
wer.

5

Looking through the notes I made on April
h, 26th, and 27th, I find the following
ries:

Driving through the eastern suburbs of
lin—Bisdorf, Malsdorf, Adlershof, Karl-
st, Köpenik and others. In the course
the fighting we've gone through their
th and breadth so many times that we know
the suburbs of Berlin as well as we do those of Moscow. Lakes and orchards. Everything is in bloom. The smell of gunpowder intermingles with that of the lilac. Under a fragrant acacia stands a gun shelling the centre of the city. The stench of corpses rises from abandoned German trenches. A combination of spring and death. The Hitlerite empire is disintegrating amidst sweet aroma of flowers. The streets are jammed with people; Berliners are seeking safety in the suburbs. Here the houses are intact. Closer to the city there are miserable hovels, workers' "summer homes" put together from old plywood and sheet metal. Pitiful, little cabbage patches. . .

"The Berliners shower us with questions, serve and cling to us. All day long the Germans sweep the streets apparently to impress us with their diligence. Some say: 'I'm not a German subject, you see. I have an Argentine passport,' naively imagining we know nothing about the fascists' Argentine contacts. . .

"On Frankfurter Allee a Katyusha battery hammers at the Reichstag with its long bolts of lightning. . .

"Flanking Berlin from the North, I am heading for the West. Today Colonel General Kuznetsov's troops are attacking Berlin from the West. The first time I saw this autobahn, which describes almost a complete circle around Berlin, was on April 21st. It was impossible to travel along it then, for the assault on the outskirts of Berlin was in progress. Now everything—artillery and tanks—is flowing across it to take the shortest road to the centre of the city. The asphalt of the road is astoundingly smooth; it runs in two ribbons, each nine metres wide, with a two-metre green strip in the middle. Six traffic lanes in both directions at once. The sun is pale. The apple trees are in bloom. To the left is Berlin in flames. . .

"Colonel General Kuznetsov told me: 'There is terrible fighting going on in the subway. The Germans are training searchlights down the underground tunnels and sweeping them with machine-gun fire. We gave up the idea of blowing up the subway for fear that the whole city might collapse. . . .'

"A column of people liberated from Kaulsdorf camp march by. Among them a tottering old man wearing a skull cap, a clergyman named Khizhnyakov. His wife is with him. He is seventy-six and she sixty-four. Why were they brought here? He does not know. They worked clearing up the ruins for 200 grams of bread a day. How did they manage to survive? 'We stole ration cards,' he said. 'To steal from the enemy is no sin. But two weeks ago the Italians got caught stealing ration cards; they went about it a bit too crudely. And because of them, those Italians, things got pretty bad for all of us. We starved. The Lord helped us. He sent us the Red Army. . . .'

"Among them was a couple, a Dutchman and a Galician woman. Married while in German captivity. He is a young, slow-moving, red-haired colossus; she, a lively, olive-skinned gracious little thing. They speak a peculiar mixture of Dutch and Ukrainian to one another. You can see they are very much in love. And

are happy to be free. She is ready to go with him to the Hague, and he with her to Kolomii. . , "

6

Joseph Buick, the tall, nervous Belgian engineer, I met pushing a cart on the Berlin autobahn with a group of other engineers and some women, both young and old. As they paused for a rest in the shade of the roadside pines, I had a talk with him about the Germans. Remarking how obliging the German civilians were, Buick said with almost fierce conviction:

"The German knows no middle course. Either he grovels before you with repulsive servility, or he shoots you in the back."

"Can you say that of the entire nation?" I put in, taking the part of the devil's advocate. "After all, the Germans have their good qualities too, for instance, they are persistent, methodical, diligent, and they are good organizers. . ."

The Belgian burst out laughing.

"The virtues you enumerate, Monsieur," he said, "are purely technical ones that stand them in good stead whatever they do. They can be applied equally for good and evil. The Germans chose evil: they were persistent in looting, methodical in torturing their victims, diligent as killers, and they were excellent as organizers of death camps . . . In general, the German character is not properly understood. It is believed that faithfulness, persistence and thoroughness are cornerstones of the German nature. That is not so. I know the Germans. I've watched them these three accursed years. Most Germans are fickle, treacherous, hysterically capricious and have been utterly corrupted by Hitler. Perhaps there is the other kind. I don't know them, though."

"It seems to me," I said, not at all too certain of myself, "that there should be the other kind too."

"I did not see them, Monsieur," the Belgian snapped. "Germany is a country of ruins, and not only physical ruins but mainly moral. . ."

I recalled this conversation several days later on witnessing an incident on the Alexanderplatz. It happened on May 2nd, when Berlin had just surrendered and the German troops were laying down their arms. The old authority had gone and a new one had not as yet taken its place. A crowd of German civilians, men and women, of quite respectable appearance, gathered to loot the basement of a large department store which remained intact although the upper floors of the building had been demolished. I watched the scene with interest not entirely without a feeling of malignant joy. Captain Savelyev, who was with me and liked to collect such stories, was delighted. Just then a Red Army patrol under the command of a lieutenant, elderly and smart, appeared on the scene. The lieutenant, incidentally, had already found time to shave and polish his boots in order to be presentable as befitting a capital, even though a conquered one.

The patrol began dispersing the looters, some scattered with that servile look on their faces that is so typical of defeated Germans, others disappointedly. One elderly, exceedingly well dressed German was downright indignant, he plucked up the courage to approach the lieutenant. He spoke German. I give the conversation verbatim:

The German *(in a tone of lofty indignation)*: Why are you stopping us from going through the stockrooms?

Lieutenant: So that's what you call it? That is looting. And looting is forbidden.

The German: But, after all, this is between us Germans.

Lieutenant *(restraining his rising anger)*: Looting is prohibited. In your time you plundered us. Then we drove you out.

The German *(readily agreeing)*: That's right. But now we are robbing our own kind.

Lieutenant: Only because you have no one else to rob. *(In an authoritative tone.)* Nevertheless you can't do it. *(Then, as if addressing a child or an idiot.)* That isn't the way we do things. You cannot loot. You'll have to make up your mind that that's how things stand.

The German with an offended air shrugged his shoulders and walked off muttering something under his breath. I could not hear what he said, but his whole being seemed to cry out: "What next? What a time we're going to have!"

It was then I remembered what the Belgian had said about the moral ruins of Germany and realized that it was the repair of this kind of demolition that would be the most difficult task of all.

But to return to the chronological account of events.

7

On the evening of April 29th, General Weidling delivered his daily report to Hitler. Hitler had changed beyond recognition. His face twitched constantly, his hands shook and his voice was barely audible. Present on the occasion were Göbbels, General Krebs, Hitler's personal aide General Borkdorf and Hitler's shadow Martin Borman.

Weidling says, he was struck by the deathly pallor of Göbbels, whom he had not seen for some time. It was the pallor of a man who had long lived underground, and, indeed, Göbbels was notorious for his cowardice. Even when there was no air raid warning he did not leave the shelter, for a long time no one had seen him in the open. Göbbels led the life of a mole.

In his report lasting an hour and a half, which proved to be his last, Weidling argued that it was impossible to continue resistance, for all hopes of supplying Berlin with ammunition and food by air had collapsed.

Hitler mumbled in reply that he had issued another, special order to ship ammunition and food to Berlin, and that if the situation did not improve by the following day he would agree to give up Berlin and allow the troops to make an effort to break out of the trap.

"Mein Führer," said Weidling, "as a soldier I must tell you that it is no longer po

ible to defend Berlin and you. Perhaps ou might still be able to leave."

The man with the little black moustache nd the twitching face gazed in front of him ith the vacant stare of a drug addict.

"Useless," he muttered. "My orders. . . obody obeys orders. . ."

At that the man fell silent, visibly shrinkng. It was this economy of words which was o unlike the loquacity of the self-centred itler that struck Weidling most of all.

8

The next day, April 30th, heavy shells tore rough the walls of the Chancellery. Massive ut-glass chandeliers were wrenched loose and ashed to the floor. The blast sent a shower f the Chancellor's letterheads down through ie halls. Slabs of porphyry came crashing own from the walls of the Marble Hall.

SS-men of Hitler's bodyguard later told e that on that day they had been mustered r parade in the underground shelter. Their lours had been unfurled for the occasion, d the parade was commanded by SS Briadenführer Monke, who was in charge of e defense of the Chancellery. Then Hitler d appeared, dressed in an ordinary black it but wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross. e wore his usual pompous air as he goosepped past the ranks, pumping his fat legs and down, and his right arm, noticeably aking, was outstretched in a gesture he elieved to be classical. Everything was as sual with one exception: Hitler did not say word. The hysterical prattler was silent. hy? Was it because he did not want to betray e tremor in his voice? Or perhaps it was t Hitler at all, but his double, and hence rbidden to speak in order not to give the ow away.

That same day at 2.30 in the afternoon neral Weidling called a conference at his adquarters of the commanders of the defense nes of Berlin, which had considerably windled in size by that time. The participants were inclined to the opinion that the ly thing to do was to try to break out of e city. Just at that moment an SS Oberurmbahnführer (equivalent in rank to lieutnant colonel) of Hitler's bodyguard entered e hall with a message from Hitler.

On seeing this member of Hitler's praetorian ard a thought that had occurred to him so any times before flashed through Weidling's nd.

"Mark my word," he said, leaning over wards his officers, "here comes the order shoot me."

The SS-man handed General Weidling an velope. To the general's surprise Hitler thorized him to take any action he saw fit.

But exactly three hours later the same messger brought another letter to the general. is time it was signed by an aide to the offi- commanding the SS brigade defending e Chancellery, and it ordered Weidling: to stop all preparations for a breakthrough m Berlin, 2) to defend Berlin to the last n, and 3) upon receiving the message report to General Krebs, the Chief of the neral Staff.

Bewildered by these contradictory orders and a good deal worried about his own fate, Weidling reached the Chancellery at 7 P. M., after making his way through the burning streets under the whining arcs of the shells.

Upon entering Hitler's office he found Göbbels, Krebs and Borman there.

The trio informed Weidling that at 3.00 P. M. that day, April 30th, Hitler and his wife had committed suicide, first taking poison and then shooting themselves. Conforming with Hitler's wishes, the bodies had been cremated in the garden of the Chancellery, in the so-called *Suicide Park*.

Weidling gasped as he listened to this story. Then Göbbels resumed his businesslike tone.

"In his testament the Führer appointed the Government: Grossadmiral Dönitz to be president, Borman, minister for the party, and I, Doctor Göbbels, the Reichschancellor," he said.

At this moment Weidling knew that what he wanted more than anything else, perhaps more than anything he had ever desired in his life, was to come safely through this carnage. And he promised himself that he would do everything he possibly could to get out of it.

9

It had long been the talk of the town in Berlin that it was not Hitler but his double who was sitting in the Chancellery. And that that might have been the case was by no means improbable. Hitler's features were commonplace enough to make it easy to find one or even several doubles for him. The combination of a black moustache, the hair combed like a pimp's, a low forehead and a bulldog chin—all common enough among Germans. I saw one of "Hitler's corpses" on May 2nd in the Chancellery. I say "one," because there were something like six in all. It was a man strongly resembling Hitler dressed in a black suit and wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross. When called upon to identify the corpse neither Hitler's chief physician nor any other member of his household would say it was the Führer; nor would they identify the other bodies that were found. The real Hitler, they said, had prominent frontal bones (a feature typical, incidentally, of the Neanderthal man of the Quaternary Period, and the chimpanzee of our times), and a few other zoological peculiarities which the corpses lacked. All six bodies had holes drilled into their foreheads by revolver bullets. Were they driven to suicide or were they simply killed by Hitler's bodyguard? What unsavory tragedy in the best style of cheap crime thrillers lies at the back of all this?

Did General Weidling believe that Hitler was dead? He did not stop to think about it. Weidling wasn't so much interested in Hitler's death as in his own life.

"If they really resorted to planting a double," he said, "it was the most stupid and disastrous attempt at deception National Socialism ever fell back on."

Another general who had been taken prisoner of war was, on the contrary, quite ready to admit that Hitler had fled.

"You have seen the Unter den Linden?"

he said. "Once it was the most beautiful street in Berlin and the favourite place for parades and processions. Now it has been reduced to ruins and lindens and chestnuts that line it are mere charred skeletons." He fell silent for a minute, sighed, and then continued. "But that is not the crux of the matter, however. You have noticed that the Unter den Linden is very wide, so wide as to make a perfectly suitable landing strip. And that is what it was: Berlin's last airdrome, the only one left of the thirty-five it had only a short while back. A few days ago, on April 30th to be exact, twenty aircraft took off from the Unter den Linden and headed for an unknown destination. Who knows maybe Hitler was on board one of them? Moreover there was a rail runway for airplanes in the subterranean shelter under the Imperial Chancellery . . ."

10

On May 1st, Krebs, the Chief of the German General Staff, appeared before Colonel General Chuikov as an envoy. This was in Berlin. The headquarters of Chuikov's army occupied a large, six-story building that had remained intact though badly pitted by shell splinters. The conversation took place to the accompaniment of deafening artillery fire of the nearby battle for the centre of the city.

General Krebs tried to be off-handed about it, but in the circumstances the attempt was at the best in rather bad taste. He spoke Russian, and having been military attaché at the German embassy in Moscow before the war, indulged in a few reminiscences.

"Do you remember, General," he said, striking a lyrical note, "that exactly five years ago today, on May 1st, 1940, we stood side by side during the parade on Red Square in Moscow?"

"I do not recall it," said Chuikov coldly. "I do not remember you. Will you outline your mission?"

Krebs, abashed, mumbled that the German command proposed a truce. It was clear from what he said that the surviving fascist units were seeking a separate agreement with the U.S.S.R. These proposals were rejected without more ado, and Chuikov informed the envoy that the Soviet command was ready to accept only the unconditional surrender of Berlin.

General Krebs left having failed in his mission.

On returning to his own lines, he dived into the subterranean labyrinths. After this General Weidling was again summoned to a conference at the Chancellery. But before I describe this memorable meeting, the last convulsion that racked the body of fascism before death set in, let us review what was going on from within Berlin.

11

Since two o'clock the previous day the red flag had flown over the Reichstag where it had been raised after a fierce battle by the intrepid men of Captain Neustruyev's battalion. Berlin is a city of straight streets, but we, a group of war correspondents, found them difficult to negotiate. The way was barred by crumbled walls and mountains of rubble, conflagrations and craters. We crossed the Spree and the canals over the old bridges which the Germans had not had time to blow up in the confusion (as distinct from what happened in Warsaw and Poznan). Thus we made our way to the Charlottenburg and Schöneberg areas, guided by the excellent map of the city which we had acquired on the other side of Oder and which showed the air raid damage Berlin had suffered. In both of these sections, as well as on many streets of the downtown section heavy fighting was going on. The Germans as they retreated were incessantly firing at point-blank range from their self-propelled and anti-aircraft guns. Faust-throwers in the ground floor of buildings hurled their grenades even at isolated Red Army men. On the second floor were the machine-gunners and up in the attics, snipers. In general, the last days of Berlin, April 30th, May 1st, and the early part of May 2nd, saw the heaviest action of any during the street fighting.

The intersection of one of the cross streets and Blumenstrasse was heavily barricaded with all kinds of obstacles. There was a wood-and-earthwork barrier, dragon's teeth and hedgehog obstacles made from lengths of rail. The Germans had connected two adjoining buildings into a single fort. A reconnaissance party with the assault group under small, but sturdy and taciturn Junior Lieutenant Arseni Konkov established that the garrison was made up of a motley crew: junkers from Berlin military schools, Volksturm men, police and anti-aircraft gunners, most of them having fled here from sections of the city already taken by our forces.

As is always the case in street fighting there was no no-man's-land between us and the enemy. The two sides were in direct contact with one another, and it was interesting to watch the observers at work, ingeniously spotting the enemy's movements without disclosing their own location. It goes without saying that binoculars or trench periscopes were useless. Only the naked eye could serve here, for the distance to the enemy's position was measured in metres. One of the observers, Senior Sergeant Miron Gurevich, a big man with the hands of a blacksmith, squeezing himself with difficulty into a bit of a space in the ruins, gripped the field telephone in his huge hand, and whispered into the mouthpiece in a hoarse and excited voice:

"Let the corner window on the second floor have it. . . There are Faust-men there. . . When the artillery had done its work he would say: "Good! The bastards are done for . . ."

Arseni Konkov and the four members of this reconnaissance detail were all covered in lime from constantly crawling in the rubble. The enemy was both overhead, in the attics and on the roofs, and underground in the tunnels of the subway and in the sewers. And first into the assault against them went the reconnaissance men whose courage was indeed peerless. They broke into the first floor and working with grenades and daggers took possession of it, thus cutting off the Germans' retreat. Our tanks and self-propelled

ins stationed some 400 metres away kept
accurate fire at the upper stories. The
erman's were blinded and deafened, and
on a white strip torn from a sheet appeared
nidst the clouds of brick dust as a token of
rrender. Our success was complete, but
rseni Konkov paid for it with his life.
grenade splinter had torn open his chest.
e lay in a corner on a heap of greatcoats,
rrounded by comrades, his eager boyish
ce now drawn and grim. He died as he had
ved, silent and without complaint.

While the fighting went on in one lot of
ock , life quickly began to revive in others.
many districts German mayors had already
en appointed. Our leaflets and orders in
erman translation had been posted on the
alls and crowds of Berliners gathered to
ad them. Rations were distributed to the
cal people then and there. Men of the motor
ansport corps were busy posting up new
lacards, most frequent of them being one
ith Stalin's words: "... Hitlers come and
, but the German people and the German
ate remain."

The old posters had not yet been removed
verywhere and there were strange sights
be seen like the one I ran into on the Koper-
kusstrasse. Here, against the background of
old poster on German atrocities with the
scription "Daddy, Kill That German!"
ere was a neat queue of Germans with mess
ns and beaming faces receiving a ration of
at from a Red Army man at a food centre
t up by our military commandant.

12

It was this very day, May Ist, that General
eidling came to the conference at the impe-
l Chancellery. He went directly to Göbbels.
he premises he passed through were
far cry from any ordinary apartments.
e shelter under the Chancellery had four-
en stories. It was like an inverted sky-
raper. Weidling took the lift down to one
the lower floors where Göbbels' richly
rpeted office was located. Göbbels, Krebs
d Borman were there as usual.

One could not hear the din of battle in the
elter. A heated argument ensued.

"The Führer has forbidden surrender,"
bbels kept insisting.

Borman supported him. General Krebs
ok refuge in silence. General Weidling
t his temper, a thing he rarely did.

"But the Führer is no longer living!"
shouted.

"The Führer always insisted on fighting
the end," Göbbels reiterated, ignoring
eidling's outburst.

Weidling gave up. After declaring that
rlin could hold out no longer, he left
conference.

That day Göbbels astounded Berliners
h a brand new lie. In his May Ist procla-
tion he insisted that all the troops had
n removed from the Western Front and
e being rushed to the defense of Berlin.
t was one day before the surrender and
re was not a single person in Berlin who
not know that it was too late to take
n one soldier from the Western Front
where the German troops were surrender-
ing en masse to the Allies.

As he took leave of Krebs, Weidling invited
him to his command post.

"I shall remain where I am to the end,"
answered Krebs, "and then I shall put a
bullet through my head. I think Göbbels
will do the same."

And that was just what Krebs and Göbbels
did. As for Weidling, he took his decision.
He had no desire to shoot himself. Nor did
he want others to shoot him. He issued an
order to the troops defending Berlin to the
effect that those who wished to fight their
way out of Berlin should do so if they could,
and the rest were to lay down their arms.

General Weidling had already decided
to take his place among the rest. And what
of the others? The general sentiment prevail-
ing in the Berlin garrison may be judged
from the description of a conference called
by Weidling at 9.30 on the evening of May
Ist. It was a conference of officers of the Berlin
defense headquarters and officers from the
headquarters of the 56th Armoured Corps
which Weidling had commanded before his
appointment as commander of the city's
defense.

"We have three ways out," he said, "to
resist, break through, or surrender. To resist
is useless, to break through, even in the event
of success, means escaping from one trap
only to fall into another. There remains the
third way out. ..."

There were no dissenting voices at the
conference. So that night the general sent
word to the Russian commander with Colonel
Theodor von Düffing, Chief of Staff of the
56th Armoured Corps, that the German
troops were ready to cease fire.

Next morning Weidling presented himself
at General Chuikov's headquarters. In the
middle of his story about the last days of the
Imperial Chancellery, Weidling's customary
composure deserted him and he succumbed
to a brief but violent bout of hysteria. Thus
afflicted he was unable to draw up the order
for surrender, and had to seek the assistance
of Colonel Hans Refior, Chief of Staff of the
Berlin Defense, a big, immaculate and
imperturbable officer with a monocle.

That is how Berlin surrendered. The testi-
mony given by Colonels von Düffing and
Refior differed from General Weidling's
story only in minor details.

13

On May 2nd there was a cold drizzle in
Berlin. But the rain was powerless to extin-
guish the fires. Clouds of smoke hung low
over the ruins, almost touching the red flags
waving from the city's steeples.

Sporadic fighting continued during the
morning but by early afternoon the piles
of rifles surrendered by the German soldiers
began to grow. We hurried to the Reichstag.
It was enveloped in smoke. Although our
soldiers had gotten the fire under control,
the walls were still smouldering. Shells had
torn gaping holes in the building, and you
could only guess where the main entrance had
been.

I picked up one piece of stone that had

been chipped off the Reichstag wall and put it in my pocket as a souvenir. However, my romantic companion, Captain Savelyev, the cavalry scout, disdained such mundane souvenirs. He was also a collector, but of a somewhat unique brand. He collected unusual incidents, curious situations. He took out a cigar and lighted it from the smouldering ashes of the Reichstag. That was the sort of souvenir he fancied. I had never met anyone who had so many strange stories to tell, and what was most remarkable, they were all true. As we made our way into one of the stations of the Berlin subway where the fighting had just ceased, Savelyev dug into his pocket and produced a thin paper ticket from the Moscow subway and stuck it up on the grey wall of the Berlin underground. That was another incident for his collection.

The staircase in the Reichstag was not damaged. Picking our way through the heaps of rubble and plaster that littered the steps, we climbed up to the second floor and entered a hall. There were yawning gaps in the walls and the mosaic floor was heaped with plaster from the ceiling and smashed furniture. The damask hangings were in shreds.

That day seemed to be divided into two parts: The first half was taken up with bloody street fighting. The second brought a stillness that sounded strange and eerie. The remainder of the day I wandered about Berlin, thousands of officers and men did the same, experiencing the sensations, comparable to no other, that the purpose of the war, the purpose even of life itself, has been accomplished and realizing that impressions formed on this day have something special about them that cannot be repeated.

"Remember that puddle?" Savelyev asked suddenly.

"What puddle?"

"The one we sloshed through at Kubinka in November 1941 when the front was just thirty miles from Moscow. . . ."

Passing a group of officers who, like ourselves, were strolling through the streets of Berlin, I overheard someone say "Remember..." "Remember," the word echoed back and forth across Berlin that day as the Red Army men recalled the long, hard road they had traversed to get there. Yes, it was good to walk through the shell-shattered, fire-gutted streets of Berlin and remember the bitter glory of the first years of the war.

I paused longest at the Brandenburg Gates. I tried to remember what it was they reminded me of? Why did the sight of them cause my heart to throb so painfully?

And then I remembered: Leningrad, the siege, the Narva Gates! The resemblance was striking. The same classic columns, the same shell scars surmounted by the same smashed sculpture, the square in which it stands, just as mutilated by shells and bombs, and the same tall barricade in the gateway itself. The Germans had been as close to the Narva Gates then as our troops were a few days ago from the Brandenburger Tor. But the Germans had stood outside Leningrad for three years. Moreover, the Germans never did reach the Narva Gates, while here we were, with our hands on the Brandenburg columns and Savelyev saying:

"That is the brightest gem of my collection."

14

Berlin surrendered at three in the afternoon. The entire garrison capitulated, from the youngest Volkstürmer aged 16 to Artillery General Weidling. I read somewhere that when he was taken prisoner General Weidling looked glum and depressed. That was not so. According to my observations, Weidling's face wore an expression of profound satisfaction, a satisfaction moreover which I believe to have been perfectly sincere, not because of any high moral principles or even because of military expediency, but for the reason he himself summed up in these words:

"Although I was in command of the defense of Berlin, the situation in the Imperial Chancellery was such that after I had taken my decision to surrender I felt safe only with the Russians."

The very day of the surrender, May 2nd, was marked by another lie released by Göbbels, his last. The German soldiers were already laying down their arms, Berlin was white with surrender flags and on the corner of Fosstrasse and Hermann Göringstrasse I saw an old German who, addressing no one in particular, exclaimed:

"Oh, how quiet, how gloriously quiet! It has not been like this for years!"

And stretching out his long scraggy neck, the old German listened to the stillness of Berlin as though it were some sweet, almost forgotten music.

In his proclamation which appeared on the morning of May 2nd, Göbbels wrote that "the heroic defenders of Berlin are successfully beating back the attacks of the Russians."

Fascism was born of lies, it thrived on lies and with its last gasp it spewed lies.

Among the books with which the windows of the Imperial Chancellery were barricaded were many descriptions of the Hitlerite campaigns. *The Conquest of Norway*, *The Subjugation of the Ukraine*, *Victory in Africa*, were some of the titles. The Germans published them in luxurious editions. The bandit assault on defenseless Denmark was presented as a new Iliad.

In *Vanquished Poland* I read a curious epigraph penned by Fieldmarshal Keitel. Once upon a time Germany was known as the country of philosophers. In fascist Germany the role of philosopher was taken by military officers.

"Goethe," Keitel wrote, "said that the thunder of the French guns in the Battle of Valmy changed world history. The great poet was mistaken. The history of the world was changed by the thunder of German guns in September 1939."

By the 2nd of May this army philosopher's aphorism looked ridiculous amidst the ruins of shattered Berlin. Its author looked even more ridiculous when I saw him a few days later in Berlin affixing his signature with a shaking hand to the act of Germany's unconditional surrender.

But of that in the next chapter.

II. HOW THEY SURRENDERED

On the night of May 7th I received a document which I prize as a precious relic:

"The bearer, Lev Slavin, writer, is permitted to be present at the airdrome and in the session halls for the special measures the command will undertake on May 8th, 1945."

This carefully worded document gave me the right to witness the greatest historical event of our time: the signing of the act of surrender by Germany.

We, the war correspondents, somewhat excited by the prospect drove to the Templehof airdrome early in the morning to be present when the Allied delegations arrived and to witness the arrival of the representatives of vanquished Germany.

We were quartered at the time in Köpenik, a southeastern suburb of Berlin, which is more less like a city than a rural settlement scorched on the bank of the River Damm. Köpenik belongs to the outer fringe of Berlin. A few years ago the Germans in their passion for the "colossal" extended the city limits to include 14 adjacent districts thus adding another 202,000 acres to the 17,000 acres of old Berlin, making the city's total territory greater than that of New York and London and thus giving the Germans more cause for boasting.

Köpenik, like most of the other outskirts of the capital, remained intact. The war had swept through Berlin leaving its suburbs more or less untouched. Gardens were in bloom around the cottages. The narrow streets were full of people. The population, women for the most part, seemed to be walking to and fro all the time. With the exception of old men and invalids, there were practically no men. They all carried baskets, and there were queues outside the food shops where rations were sold on coupons issued by the Soviet command. There were two weighty reasons for that look of satisfaction on the faces of the Berliners that surprised us so much: the first was the cessation of the bombing, shelling and street fighting, and the second, the reappearance of bread, meat, sugar and other things Berliners had not been able to get for days.

We drove down the Damm Weg, turned off onto Berlinerstrasse, passed the Silesian station, Treptower Park and Neuköln station. Only a few days ago these names had figured as battlegrounds, command points, fighting positions. Now they were peaceful streets, if you could give the name to a chaos of brick, steel girders and corpses. People were living there, although their shelters were cellars.

Soon the huge brick hangars surrounding the Templehof airdrome came into sight. Their walls were decorated with bas-relief eagles, hook-beaked, long-legged, their arrogantly stretched scrawny necks making them look more like roosters than eagles. They were modelled in that crude style of Prussian sculpture so characteristic of Berlin.

Winding our way among the craters, the debris of German planes and the ruins of hangars, we emerged onto the grass and concrete of the airdrome. Several large German Ju. 52 transport planes were standing there in perfect condition. Our troops had taken the place so quickly that the planes had not had time to take off. And, indeed, where could they have gone? Traces of air bombing mingled with the traces of fighting on the ground. Only a few days before, this had been the scene of a fierce battle.

It was still early, and stifling hot. The air shimmered. This was the kind of weather we have in Moscow in July. The concrete slabs radiated heat like an oven. Some distance away stood a number of Soviet fighters, seemingly quite at home. The hazy silhouette of Berlin loomed on all sides. A Red Army unit detailed for the guard of honour passed by. The musicians of the military band lay about on the grass. Having nothing to do, they struck up a lively tune, began to dance. It was strange to hear the familiar strains of the *Lezghinka*, *Barynya* and *Katyusha*, under the Berlin sky. The British, Soviet and American flags stirred in the faint breeze. We waited.

2

At noon a large silvery Boeing appeared. It landed causing a flutter of excitement. But the excitement was premature for the arrivals were officials of the American Embassy in Moscow. They flopped down onto the grass dotted with dandelions and daisies to wait with the rest of us.

Exactly at one fifty-two Yaks shot up into the air like bullets. A few seconds later another pair followed them. Then another seven pair followed at regular intervals, all of them headed west toward the town of Stendhal to meet the Allies in the air and escort them to Templehof.

Reporters scribbled busily. Everyone jotted down the name "Major Tyulkin." That was the flyer who led the fighters. He had fought the Germans at Stalingrad. He had fought them in Berlin. It was from Stalingrad that we climbed the ladder of victory to Berlin.

At seven minutes to two flares were sent up. The hum of aircraft engines was heard. And soon the contours of Douglases surrounded by Yaks and Spitfires were seen. An army of cameramen deployed on the field.

Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder stepped out of a plane. He was the representative of the Supreme Command of the Allied Expeditionary Force, a tall, slim man, no longer young but with a youthful suppleness of figure. His trench cap worn at a jaunty angle added to his youthful appearance. His courteous smile quickly changed to an expression of profound pleasure when three stalwart standard-bearers, raising their flags, marched onto the runway. To the right waved the American flag, to the left the British. The Soviet flag was in the middle. The guard of honour marched forward.

It was an inspiring moment: Russians, Americans and British shaking hands in the fascist capital reduced by Soviet fighting men.

General Carl A. Spaats, Commander of the United States Strategic Air Forces and Admiral Sir Harold Barrow, Commander of the Allied Naval Forces in Europe, were also deeply moved.

The numerous members of the Allied delegations and the war correspondents, American and British, came from the planes. They glanced about them with interest and took out their note-books. At last, they were in Berlin, the focal point of the world's most sensational news!

The Allied representatives were met by Army General Sokolovsky. Colonel General Berzarin, commandant of Berlin, with his expressive, large-featured, boyish face under a mass of grey hair, Lieutenant General Bokov, and others.

Sir Arthur Tedder stepped up to the microphone. In a voice trembling with emotion, he spoke a few words of greeting and gratitude.

At that moment another plane landed some distance away. No one noticed it at first, for all attention was centred on the Allies. I had a hunch though and walked towards it. And sure enough, in the doorway appeared the Germans.

3

They alighted one by one in order of rank. The first was Fieldmarshal Keitel, a wizened old man whose face had that greyish hue that comes from sitting too long in underground shelters. Everything about him seemed to be all grey, his face, his uniform and his neatly trimmed moustache under his slightly hooked nose. The monocle in his right eye gave him a glassy look. His facial muscles were tensed. Keitel strove to hide the insignificance of his appearance by an arrogant tilt of the head that reminded one of those scrawny eagles on the Templehof hangars. The fieldmarshal's beaked nose and general cockiness of manner heightened the resemblance. In his left hand he carried his marshal's baton, a short rod with incrustations no bigger than a drumstick. He made three passes with the baton in the manner of a second-rate juggler. As a matter of fact, he paraded that baton all over the place. "You see," he appeared to be saying, "I have a marshal's baton, kindly take note." It was like the symbol of the ambition of Prussian militarism that had gone somewhat mildewy in cellars.

Next was Air Colonel General Stumpf, a short stumpy man with the coarse, bloated type of German features. He glanced around him blinking nervously. Beside him the third leading member of the delegation was bedraggled Admiral General Friedeburg. Behind them came about 12 generals and other officers.

One of our generals approached the German delegation. And there followed a curious psychological touch. As he caught sight of the Soviet general, Keitel forced a polite smile and with several flourishes, much bowing and scraping he tripped forward to meet the general. Behind him, wearing the same forced smile and with the same mincing gait, advanced the entire German delegation.

It was obvious what Keitel was up to. He wanted to set the stage for a meeting among equals. Victors or vanquished, what did it matter? We, the generals, are above such things, we shake hands over our armies, our countries and events.

But he did not get away with it. Our general gave the Germans a cold, business-like look, then turned to the guards.

"Escort those two," he ordered pointing to Keitel and Stumpf, "to that car, these three, here . . ." and so on.

Keitel wilted at once. A look of mingled anger and humiliation spread over his face and remained with him throughout the rest of the day.

And so the German delegation moved toward the waiting cars. I could not take my eyes off them. They marched in step four in a row—a unit of generals of vanquished Germany. No one had lined them up, they had fallen naturally into line obeying that mechanical drill-ground impulse that is innate in every German whether soldier, general or an ordinary burgher. They were escorted by British officers who had conveyed them all the way from Flensburg to Berlin.

It was a distance of not more than 200 yards from the plane to the automobiles. Five minutes' walk.

The Germans marched with that wooden stiffness that is typical of so many German military men. Their spurs rattled and the heels of their polished leather boots beat out a measured tapping as the dust of Berlin rose beneath their feet. The dust of boundless ruins, the dust that enveloped all Berlin like a fog, the reddish-grey brick and alabaster dust of war. The Germans marched with downcast eyes raising their heads now and then to throw a quick furtive look about them only to lower it at once in order to keep out the spectacle of defeated Berlin. Keitel marched on the right flank, clutching his baton with nervous fingers.

We thought of many things as we watched that remarkable procession: we thought of the wounds of Stalingrad, the sufferings of Coventry, the anguish of Leningrad and the humiliation of Paris. And they marched on, involuntarily keeping step to the beat of the triumphant, literally radiant, strains of the march the band was playing in honour of the Allies.

They entered the cars and waited to be driven away. And although they endeavoured not to look in the direction of the Allies, although they tried to maintain a haughty immobility, their eyes and heads involuntarily turned to where the flags waved and the music thundered. Gradually the crowd of reporters around the Germans thinned out. They had ceased to be of interest. Everything was now clear.

Now everyone began to leave Templehof. Half a hundred cars formed a procession through Berlin, headed by the Red Army and the Allies. The Germans brought up the rear.

4

On Altfriedrichsfeld we drove under an enormous arch crowned with a facsimile of the Order of Victory. On the façade was the inscrip-

ion: "Glory to the Red Army!" This was the rch of Victory. For the Germans, the Arch f Defeat.

We turned to the right onto Schlossstrasse, street of parks and gardens. We would soon each Karlhorst. This brief typically German ame had gained a lasting place in history.

In an effort to give as accurate and complete n account as possible I hurriedly made notes s we drove along. Here are some of them:

."Entering Karlhorst. The last stop on this istorical route. Stifling heat. A tall factory himney demolished by a shell. Still smoking. Gardens in bloom. Scent of lilac. Passing food tores. A German emerges. Middle-aged, wear- ng soft hat, gold-rimmed spectacles, re- pectable. Carrying groceries wrapped in copy f *Völkischer Beobachter*. One of the American orrespondents stopped the car, got out and sked the German for the paper. On observing he Soviet officers in the car, the German doffs is hat with a polite and not insincere gesture. Vrapped in the newspaper were meat, bread nd sugar. The way to a man's heart is through is stomach, they say. To the German heart at ny rate. Not all of them, though. At one of ie crossings on the Schlossstrasse I caught ght of Keitel. He was looking at a slogan alked up on the wall of a building, one of the logans Göbbels had ordered put up in haste uring the last days of Hitlerite Berlin: 'Ihr ollet leben, also kämpft!' (You want to live, en fight!) Keitel turned his grey patchy ce away. How often he has had to turn away day! He turned to the left. On the pavement ood a group of booted stalwarts wearing the hite armbands of surrender, their hands in eir pockets, their bearing insolent. This me Keitel did not turn round. He stared at em fixedly. . . ."

I shoved my notebook into my pocket for ie car stopped. We had arrived.

5

We entered a modest-sized two-story build- ng surrounded by a garden. This was part of ie Berlin Military Engineering School. Per- aps our children will soon see pictures of it in eir school history books.

The delegations went to the rooms assigned em. Surrounded by experts and advisers, ey commenced to draw up the act of uncon- itional surrender of Germany. In its final rm the act was brief, but its terse solemn ording represented a good day's work.

We were not idle either. We had our dis- atches to write about the scenes at Templehof at morning.

When they were ready, we took them to ie of the wings of the school where two di- ct lines to Moscow had been installed. One the correspondents was shouting into the lephone trying to hear himself speak above ie hum of conversation that filled the room.

"Hello, I'm speaking from Berlin. Don't ou know Germany's going to sign the act of rrender today? That's right! Well, don't rget I was the first to tell you. I don't know hen, no one knows yet, but it may be any inute now. We're waiting. Hello! The French legation has just arrived. . . Yes, they're bit late . . . They're passing me right now, aded by General Delatre de Tassigny, of the French army. A tall, virile looking man . .. But you'd better wait till you get the pic- tures . . . I'm sending them by plane . . . Hello! A few details about General Delatre. He fought in the Battle of France in 1940. As dis- tinct from many other French generals Delatre gave it to the Germans as far back as then. He's the hero of what they call the Battle of the Graveyard. Let me explain. At the end of May 1940 he and his division held a 20-mile sector of the front along the River Aisne for seven days. There's a cemetery there—men who fell in the World War I. The German tanks didn't get through and had to change the direc- tion of their thrust. Got that? Good, elaborate it a bit and stick it in my story. Hello! . . . What's the weather like in Moscow? Raining? It's hot here, real summer weather . . . I'm starved. There's grub here but we daren't go off to eat in case we miss something. Hello! Call up my wife, will you, tell her I send her my regards from Berlin."

Since nobody knew for sure when the actual signing would take place we had to be on the spot. By about six o'clock, however, we weak- ened. The dining room was a few minutes' walk away. Snatching a hasty meal we hurried back only to find that nothing had happened in our absence. History was still pending. History was in no hurry.

The Allied correspondents were dying to have a close-up of the city. Finally they took the plunge and drove off to the centre of the town. Within half an hour they were back. They too were afraid of missing the great event.

The suspense was getting on everyone's nerves. There was nothing to do but wait. Eve- rything that had happened up to that moment had been reported, filmed, photographed. The cameramen and radio people had set up their apparatus in the hall. We had clean note-books and sharpened pencils ready, waiting.

6

It was getting dark. We smoked incessantly, walked up and down the long vestibule chat- ting with the Anglo-American correspon- dents.

One of them, a lanky bearded fellow repre- senting an American broadcasting company, looked like a romantic planter.

"I guess I'll be able to go home to America at last," he said wistfully.

"At last?"

"Haven't been there for eight years."

"Why?"

"Well, every time I wanted to leave some- thing happened in Europe. And every time it was always the Germans. The world is cer- tainly fed up with them. Just think how long they've been worrying the whole planet. They won't let you live. Thank God, it'll be all over with them today."

Another American correspondent, a middle- aged man, was warning his hearers not to trust the Germans.

"Don't put any faith in that humble man- ner of theirs," he said. "Behind it all is a long- ing for revenge. This is the fourth post-war meeting with the Germans I have witnessed, and the second with Keitel. The first was on November 11th, 1918, in Compiegne, the second was on May 28th, 1919, in Versailles.

The third was on June 22nd, 1940, also Compiegne . . . It was in Compiegne, that I first saw Keitel. He was the one who dictated the terms of that humiliating armistice to General Hünzinger, the French representative. And today he, himself, is in Hünzinger's boots. That's fate! Yes, I'm meeting the Germans for the fourth time. And here in Karlhorst. This time, of course, it's a much more spectacular event."

"Why?"

"To make the Germans sign the act of surrender in their own capital is a master stroke. But they don't change just the same. I saw one of your Cossacks playing with a German child today. Other people saw it, too. Of course, a youngster doesn't matter. But all Germans over 10 are hopeless. Take it from me."

Some weeks later I visited the American zone of Germany on the other side of the Elbe and talked with many American soldiers and officers.

"I know," continued the American correspondent, "some people think that since their defeat all the Germans have been magically transformed. All of them, even old man Keitel. By the way, I can show you his latest picture."

He pulled out of his pocket the issue of the *Völkischer Beobachter* he had taken that day from a German on the street.

"It is dated April 20th," he said. "Do you know what day that was? Hitler's birthday. You gave him a wonderful birthday gift by starting the Battle of Berlin on that day. I'm going to take this paper back home with me to America. I would ask you, gentlemen, to autograph it and certify that it was taken in Berlin from a German who used this holiday issue to wrap up his groceries."

We opened the paper, curious to see what the *Völkischer Beobachter* had to say on April 20th, 1945, Hitler's birthday and a few days before the fall of Berlin.

The paper looked rather glum. It was reduced in size to two small pages and the sour, but pompous tone of its editor, Alfred Rosenberg, entitled *The Führer's Birthday and the Decisive Battle*, was in sharp contrast to the false optimism of the communiqué issued by headquarters. A long hysterical article by Göbbels urged the population not to abandon their Führer and promised that the Führer too would not abandon "his people." A large grease spot blurred Göbbels' eloquence just at this point. Elsewhere we read directions how to make tea out of cabbage leaves and a long list of casualties on the Eastern Front.

The only illustration was a rather grimy photograph of Hitler reviewing troops in company with Dönitz, Himmler and our old acquaintance Keitel, his aged face tired and bloated with the effort of putting up a front.

A stir caused us to turn round. Marshal Zhukov and the other delegates were entering the hall. We slipped quietly into our places.

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Zhukov, Vyshinsky, Tedder, Spaats, Barrow and Delatre de Tassigny were seated around the presidium table which stood on a slight elevation.

The numerous members of the delegations and representatives of the press sat at long tables at right angles to the presidium. The places reserved for the German delegation at a small table placed on the side were still empty.

The pens of the newspapermen were busily scratching away. A New York correspondent jumped onto a table and walked down it in his heavy boots. Cameramen climbed onto chairs and windowsills.

I glanced at Zhukov, at his powerful, energetic face, and recalled his past. I had had the good fortune to see him at different times over a period of several years and always at moments of decisive victories. I remembered Zhukov when he led the operations at Khalkhin-Gol in 1939, at the barricades around Leningrad in 1941, and somewhat later in the forests near Moscow, on the wintry defense lines outside the Soviet capital, and finally on the path of glory from Warsaw to Berlin where, as in the former operations under the brilliant leadership of Stalin, he smashed the enemy.

Presently Zhukov rose to his feet and in terse and precise sentences explained the purpose of this meeting which was to accept the unconditional surrender of the command of the armed forces of Germany.

Whereupon the German delegation was brought in.

In the doorway appeared Keitel. Again he made those juggler-like passes with his marshal's baton and sat down with Stumpf on his right and Friedeburg on his left. The other twelve members of the delegation remained standing behind them.

At Zhukov's suggestion, Keitel handed to the heads of the Allied delegations the document authorizing the German delegation to sign the act of surrender.

From the heads of the delegations the document was passed on to the correspondents who examined it with great interest. It was a small piece of paper signed by Gross Admiral Dönitz. Under the words "Supreme Command" the word "Berlin" had been inked out, and "Main Headquarters" written in. The "headquarters" had fled in such haste that it had had no time to print new letterheads.

This was hardly the time and the place for the German delegates to do much talking. Representatives of vanquished Germany, they had come for one sole purpose: to sign the unconditional surrender.

But Keitel wanted to show off a little. The Hitlerite upper crust had always suffered from a fondness for theatrical gestures and pompous phrases.

While the act of surrender was being read and translated, Keitel put on his act. His facial expression and his whole manner were studiedly haughty. He sat astride his chair and tried to stress his indifference by fiddling with his baton: now leaning on it, now dropping it with a loud clatter on the table, now laying his hairy hands over it with a supercilious air. It is a pity that that excellent documentary film *Berlin* fails to show any of the many extremely expressive moments when this artificial and rather moth-eaten mask of his slipped off and his true physiognomy, bewildered and frightened, was revealed.

His neighbours behaved more naturally

The expression on the face of Colonel General Stumpf, representative of the German Air Forces, was one of unrelieved gloom. General Admiral von Friedeburg, commander of German naval forces, was the personification of shame and confusion.

At times all three would put their heads together and argue in low tones. Stumpf whispered something to Keitel, casting a look of hatred at him. "Rubbish!" he seemed to be saying. "Sign the document. This is no time to quibble. . . " In order to sign the act of surrender the German delegation had to walk halfway across the hall over to another table standing beside the presidium.

Keitel began to sign. The cameras clicked. The long-awaited moment had come. Hundreds of cities had been reduced to dust, fertile lands had been laid waste, millions of people had been slaughtered, and the Russian people had had to release all their titanic strength in order that Germany should at last be defeated and that this man, representing the armed forces of Germany, should sign his name on the piece of paper before him.

The signing of the act took quite a long time because many sheets in different languages had to be signed. Keitel did not use the desk set standing on the table; he signed with his own fountain pen, evidently unwilling to leave any souvenirs. This, however, did not prevent one of the correspondents from taking the inkwell afterwards. Everything in this hall seemed to be a relic, everything breathed history.

Finally the act was signed. Marshal Zhukov concluded that remarkable day with the words:

"The German delegation may withdraw."

The German delegation crowded in the doorway and that sickening baton came into view again—and the Germans disappeared into the Berlin night. With the measured tread of soldiers they marched off to their quarters under escort.

I walked over to the open window. A mingled wave of happiness and strangeness suddenly swept over me. I could not understand the reason for it. I looked out of the window at the stars, at the lights in the houses, and at the dazzling stream of light that poured from the hall to the street. Ah, so that was it! No more blackouts! That was the reason for that gladness! For the first time since June 1941, I was looking out of a lighted window into the night. How many times in the past four years had I longed for just this moment! And now it had come, in Berlin, in the building in which Germany had just surrendered.

Translated by Rose Prokofyeva.

DMITRI FURMANOV

(In commemoration of 20th anniversary of his death)

Dmitri Furmanov

There is a scene in the film *Insurrection*, which is based on Dmitri Furmanov's book of the same title, where Furmanov and his comrades, after being captured by the counter-revolutionary forces, are lying in prison, awaiting death. Their hours are numbered, and with feverish haste Furmanov is making last minute entries in his diary. The events of the last few days must be recorded and there is so little time—at any moment their captors may appear and lead them out to be shot. Under the nervous pressure of the writer's fingers the pencil-point breaks and the last word ends in a thick, jagged line . . . .

This scene is absolutely true to life. Dmitri Furmanov's posthumous papers included a note-book, filled with his firm, regular hand-writing, written in prison while awaiting death. Half-way down the last page, the writing breaks off on a black, jagged line . . . That is where the pencil-point broke.

However, on that particular occasion Furmanov and his comrades were rescued at the last moment by the Red Army and Furmanov fought on various fronts until the end of the Civil War. Later, with the help of his diaries, he wrote his two books: *Chapayev* and *Insurrection* which won him a distinguished place amongst Soviet writers.

Dmitri Furmanov, the son of a poor peasant, was born in the village of Sereda (now the town of Furmanov), on October 25th, 1891. His childhood was not an easy one and at an early age he experienced poverty and hard work. As a boy he was an avid reader, devouring everything that came his way—Russian legends, fairy tales, Mayne Reid, Walter Scott . . . His greatest treasure was a small note-book containing his first verses.

His school years passed in the town of Kineshma left an indelible mark on Furmanov's life. Here he first made the acquaintance of the Russian classics. Leo Tolstoy was his favourite author and the walls of Furmanov's room were covered with excerpts from Tolstoy's works and photographs of the great writer. He organized a literary circle at school where ardent discussions on Turgenev and Tolstoy took place. In this circle the writings of Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Gorky were also frequently discussed. Furmanov made a particularly careful study of the works of the Russian critics Chernyshevsky, Pisarev and Dobrolyubov and he greatly enjoyed reciting the poems of the Decembrist Ryleyev. Social problems dominated Furmanov's mind from early youth.

In 1912, he entered the Moscow University. Here the atmosphere was tense and strained. The tsarist officials suppressed every word of freedom in the university, the best professors were dismissed and many students were banished from Moscow. Thoughts of social injustice, of the oppressive tsarist regime recurred more frequently to Furmanov's mind. He dreamed of a new and better life. At this period he made the following entry in his diary: "It seems to me that now I have the strength to overcome all suffering, all torture, all difficulties in order to repeat to myself continuously, every minute: I live in torture, in torment, but I see the sun, I know that the hope for a better life is not vain. To fight means to live."

When World War I broke out, Furmanov could not remain in the rear. He had to be with the workers and peasants who, clad in grey greatcoats stood in the trenches, to be nearer to those "proletarians of battle" as Henri Barbusse so aptly called the men in the trenches. So Furmanov left for the front. Attached to a Red Cross train, he frequently visited the front-line positions and sent many burning articles to the newspapers of the cap-

tal, describing battle scenes and the grim ife of the soldiers in the trenches.

In 1917 Furmanov wrote in his diary: "Now here is no longer any doubt that the revolution as come but will it spread beyond Petersburg, vill it spread throughout the country? How I ong for this. Arise, O Sun! Let your burning ays bring light to the tortured heart of my ountry. Rush onward wave! I know that you vill also carry me away with yourself."

The October Revolution found Furmanov hairman of the revolutionary headquarters n the city of Ivanovo. At this time he joined he Bolshevik Party. This step was preceded y a lengthy period of searching and prob- ng. Long before the revolution he had be- ome the enemy of tsarism and of the capital- st regime. In 1917, taking an active part in he revolutionary struggle, Furmanov came o the conclusion that the Bolsheviks were he most consistent defenders of the in- erests of the people. During his work at the evolutionary headquarters, he met Mikhail 'assilievich Frunze, the comrade-in-arms of enin and Stalin and later People's Commis- ar of the Army and Navy. Frunze played n exceptional role in Furmanov's life, ecoming his friend and teacher. In those ays Furmanov wrote: "At last I have reach- d a shore, strong as marble, firm as a rock. n it I will build my citadel of faith. New con- ious work begins, work based on firm class nvictions, on implacable struggle against e class enemy. There were doubts, there as hesitation, but events, thoughts, con- rsations have brought me, inevitably, to e shores of Communism. Henceforward mitri Furmanov is a Communist-Bolshe- ik."

The world of art and literature always tracted Furmanov. "It draws me irresis- bly," he wrote. "Were it not for these im times when the people need all our rength, were it not for the Revolution, think I would have given myself up entire- y to art. . . Even now, when I am wholly ken up by the struggle, when all my being devoted to the great attack, even now this fe with its many attractions stirs and draws e."

However, the revolution developed and urmanov, one of Frunze's closest collabor- tors, concentrated on the revolutionary ruggle. The young Soviet republic as surrounded by enemies. From the orth, South, West and East, the white- uard armies were advancing. Frunze as appointed an army commander and left r the front. With him went thousands of olunteers—Ivanovo textile workers—form- g special regiments. Furmanov, also, uld not remain in the rear. His diary ads: "I have long cherished the dream of ining the workers' army. Now this dream ust be realized. There is no sense in delay. e question must be decided tomorrow. is not enough now just to love the workers, know that your greatest happiness and ost sacred duty lies in the defense of the pressed and unfortunate. . . The time s come to prove that you are always th them and always prepared to fight r their cause, which the most honourable d noble are now serving. The hour has struck. . . A man must firmly declare: I am a soldier of our army, a fighter for our ideals. Yesterday, Frunze, with his inspired and ardent words, strengthened my con- viction in the truth of my opinions and aims, and now, full of strength and courage, I shall wait for the day when, with a rifle in my hands, I take my place in the ranks of the fighters for the great liberation of the working people. We do not fear death—there can be no better death than this."

So Furmanov went to the front and a new chapter began in his remarkable life. Here he met one of the legendary commanders of the Red Army units—Vassili Chapayev —being appointed commissar to Chapayev's divi- sion. Chapayev was a man of tremendous will- power, an independent and original charac- ter in the full sense of the word. He did not at once take to Furmanov. For a long time he watched him, observed his behaviour on the battle-field, under fire. In Furmanov, Chapayev saw a man of great culture, a true representative of the working class and the Bolshevik Party. Soon Chapayev's native caution gave way to complete trust in Furma- nov and a great friendship developed between the two men. In the lulls between the fighting, the commander and his commissar were to- gether and many were the long, heart-to- heart talks between them, all of which were afterwards faithfully recorded by Furmanov in his book.

The following description of the Furmanov of those days is given by Colonel-General Khlebnikov, now Hero of the Soviet Union, who was Furmanov's companion in Chapayev's division: "While not a military man, Furma- nov was nevertheless an example both as a political worker and as a fighting leader, a fighting comrade. The first blows of Cha- payev's division were struck against the group- ing of General Khanzhin. The general had received orders from Kolchak to advance on Moscow directly through Samara. And near Buguruslan, on the river Kinel, a sanguinary battle took place which in reality decided the question who should hold the Volga— Kolchak or we. Of this battle, I recall the following episode: a regiment of Ivanovo weavers, unable to withstand the pressure of strong enemy forces, began to retreat, when at the head of one of the flank battal- ions appeared eighteen-year-old Marussya Ryabinina, a Young Communist, with a rifle in her hand. Next to her marched Dmitri Furmanov. With a shout of 'Follow me!' they led the battalion into attack. In this battle Marussya Ryabinina was killed by a bullet in the head. And when the battalion commander was killed, Furmanov took over the command and within a short time his men broke into Buguruslan, thus fulfilling the battle task."

Once, after a battle, Frunze asked Chapayev: "Well, Vassili Ivanovich, are you satisfied with your commissar?"

Chapayev threw a mischievous glance at Furmanov.

"I can honestly say I am satisfied. Well satisfied. He is a clever fellow and knows his way about."

"Well, and in battle?"

"We are always together, in all battles."

"So you get on all right?"

"We often argue, we might even have quarrelled if he had had my character. As it is, though, we get on well. My commissar has proved himself in battle. I should not hesitate to give him the command of a regiment."

This was high praise indeed from Chapayev.

Soon after, Furmanov was appointed to an important new post in Central Asia, as representative of the revolutionary military council of the Turkestan front in Semirechye. In addition to his popular educational work and organizing Soviet rule in this far away region, Furmanov had to devote many grim days to the suppression of a counter-revolutionary insurrection and to the fight against the bandits known there as basmachi.

The counter-revolutionaries plotted to kill Furmanov. They invited him for negotiations, captured him and prepared to shoot him. But even in the hands of the enemy, Furmanov never lost his presence of mind. The pages of his diary written when his life was in the greatest peril, later formed part of his book *Insurrection*. Furmanov wrote:

"Face the rebel crowd firmly. Speak confidently, calmly, without hesitation or compromise.

"And if the end has to be, it must be met in the best way possible. Perishing under the blows of their fists and riflebutts, die in such a way that good may come even of your death. To die a dog's death—whining, trembling and imploring—works harm. Die bravely and well. Gather up your strength, everything that is left in you, mobilize all the last resources of your heart and brain, not regretting the energy you spend, for this is your last mobilization. Die well. . ."

But as has been already said, the insurrection was suppressed and Furmanov escaped death.

In August 1920, he was appointed to a new front, in the Kuban. A special Red grouping, detailed to penetrate into the rear of the whiteguards and rout them, was sent against the whiteguard armies of General Ulagay who was active in the Kuban. This Red detail consisted of 1,500 volunteers and a squadron of cavalry; the commissar appointed was Dmitri Furmanov. Operating under exceptionally difficult conditions, the unit penetrated to Ulagay's headquarters and routed the whiteguards. Furmanov himself, led the attack more than once. He suffered severe shell-shock but did not leave the ranks. For his exploit in the Kuban, Furmanov was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

. . . The Civil War ended, and with it ended an important stage in Furmanov's life; a new phase was now to begin. For many long years, Dmitri Furmanov had kept his diaries faithfully. He had recorded everything: the battle conditions, the surrounding landscape, conversations with his comrades, original phrases, interesting details. . . .

In the days, when he rode through the steppes side by side with Chapayev, he was not yet thinking of this future book. He was not a writer in those days, but the battle commissar of Chapayev's division. But something impelled him not to leave these meetings and these conversations unrecorded. When the Civil War ended, Dmitri Furmanov, the division commissar, parted from his battle steed. He re-read his diary and notebooks. Chapayev's life, the entire road travelled by this man, stood clearly outlined in Furmanov's mind. It was a story that had to be written. In his imagination, he already envisioned his future book on Chapayev. But he did not find it easy to write this book. Many a night Dmitri Furmanov sat over his notes. He prepared for the writing of this book as he had often prepared for a decisive battle. Sometimes, at night, in the midst of his work, doubts assailed him. . . .

The character of Chapayev, the main hero, troubled him more than anything else. He was fired with the desire to portray Chapayev, as he had seen the living man, vividly and true to life. The thought of toning down this brilliant image repelled him.

"The question is—whether to portray Chapayev as he really was, with all his human attributes, failings and weaknesses, or to follow the usual method and create a fantastic figure, vivid but in many ways emasculated. I am more inclined towards the first."

Not wishing to idealize the image of Chapayev, an opponent of exterior, sugary romanticism, Furmanov nevertheless also objected to any naturalistic depreciation of his character; he wrote: "Symbols are longer-lived, deeper and more ecstatic than a photograph of every-day life. The way out lies in symbols."

However, the realistic image of Chapayev is not without a certain romance. In this combination of romance and realism lies the strength of Furmanov's portrait of Chapayev. We see him as a type and as an individual. It is interesting to compare two episodes of the novel. How Chapayev appeared to Furmanov (Klychkov) before he met him, and how he appeared to the writer in his living reality.

"The fabulous figure of the steppe, the chieftain Chapayev, haunted and tantalized him.

"'He certainly is a popular hero,' he was reasoning with himself. 'A hero from the camp of freebooters, like Emelyan Pugachev Stenka Razin, Ermak Timofeyevich. . Those men acted in their own way in their own time, but he has sprung up in another epoch—and his exploits are different from theirs. Judging by what Grisha told me Chapayev's chief characteristics are adventurousness and a dare-devil bravery. He is more of a hero than a fighter, more of a passionate seeker after adventure than a conscious revolutionary. . . But what a strong personality! In what sharp relief he stands out against the background of the peasant uprising! What a vivid, colourful and original figure!'"

Chapayev appears to Furmanov in the image of a legendary hero of old. And then comes his first meeting with Chapayev:

"He was examining him rapidly with piercing eyes; he was anxious to memorize every lineament of his face, to see and understand what kind of man he was.

"An ordinary, spare man, of middle height and not particularly powerful build, with

delicate, almost feminine hands; his thin, dark hair clings in wisps to his forehead; his nose is thin and sensitive; his eye-brows are narrow, they look as if they had been traced with a pencil; his lips are thin, his teeth clean and shining, his chin clean-shaven, his moustaches bushy like those of a sergeant-major. His eyes . . . they are light blue, almost green—quick, intelligent, unblinking. His face is pale, but fresh without blemish or wrinkle. He wore a field-grey jacket, navy blue trousers and top boots of deer-hide with the fur on. His cap had a red band and he held it in his hands. There was a bandolier slung around his shoulders and a revolver hung on his right hip."

Furmanov, who appears in the novel as Klychkov, was somewhat disappointed. The living Chapayev did not correspond to the figure of the legendary hero. And so Furmanov tones down the legendary image of Chapayev. But at the same time, the true features of this remarkable national hero are revealed from page to page: his wisdom, organizational abilities, his strength, his talent as a military leader, his contact with the people. Before us rises the figure of a true people's hero, the character of Chapayev with all its many facets, the figure of the real, earthly Chapayev. Furmanov succeeded in merging the typical and individual features of the man, the character of Chapayev being portrayed in continual movement and growth, our picture of him is enriched with each new page. His portrait is artistically true to life and, therefore, it is alive today and will continue to live as one of the best figures in Soviet literature.

And so, finally, Furmanov saw his first big book lying finished before him. He was extremely shy about it and did not know what to call his book—a novel, story or romance.

The book immediately won popularity. It was the first work to give a true, convincing and real portrait of the Civil War; the first book picturing the vivid figures of simple people, heroes of the Civil War.

Furmanov was no accidental, outside witness but an active participant in the events about which he wrote. That's why he succeeded so well in describing the stirring truth of life and, for that reason, there is so much warm, true lyricism in this seemingly dry book of battle.

After *Chapayev*, Furmanov wrote several other books: many stories about the Ivanovo weavers, about Frunze, about the "Red Detail" in the Kuban. He planned to write a large epic, devoted to the lives of writers, to the problems of creative work. Furmanov also worked in the State Publishing House, helped young writers with their work and took an active part in literary discussions.

Furmanov died at the early age of thirty-four.

On hearing of his death, Maxim Gorky wrote: "I have no doubt that in Furmanov we have lost a man who would soon have won a place of honour in our literature. He had seen much, he felt his surroundings keenly and he had a lively intellect. His death grieves me deeply. I watch the progress of the young with such joy, I expect so much from them and with such confidence."

The novel *Chapayev* has won wide fame, which was facilitated by the film of the same name produced by the Vassiliev brothers.

During the war waged by the Spanish people against Franko, special battalions, named in honour of Chapayev and Furmanov, were formed in Spain. And the song of the Chapayev International Battalion ended with the following lines: "We are fighting against Hitler and Franko, for a free Spain. Each one of us is a son of Chapayev. Forward to victory, assault battalion!"

The images, created by Furmanov, inspired thousands of Red Army men during the years of the Patriotic War.

Thousands of young Red Army men dreamed of being like Chapayev and performed legendary exploits in the battles against German fascists. And that was the best possible monument to the memory of Dmitri Furmanov, author of this remarkable book about Chapayev.

ALEXANDER ISBAKH

ILYA SELVINSKY'S *THE LIVONIAN WAR*

Ilya Selvinsky's new tragedy is based on the history of the rule of Tsar Ivan Grozny and of the Livonian War. Traditional themes that have often been used before are among the most difficult topical drama, since the writer has to compete with predecessors and find a new approach to characters with which his reader is already familiar.

To appreciate the inner significance of this work, its originality, it is necessary to say a few words on the literary tradition in depicting this historical figure.

The most perfect image of Ivan Grozny from the artistic point of view, and therefore the remaining in the consciousness of the readers, was created in the middle of the 19th century by A. K. Tolstoy in his novel *Prince Serebrianny* (1863) and in his tragedy *Death of Ivan Grozny* (1865). In the footnotes to his drama, A. K. Tolstoy gave an exhaustive analysis of his understanding of Tsar Ivan's nature.

"Ivan, ambitious by nature, spoilt by the flattery of the courtiers who surrounded him, and by a habit of unlimited autocracy, was above all peeved by the attempts of some nobles (during his childhood), to use him as an instrument for their own ambitions."

Ivan's reign is "a struggle with alleged opposition which long ago ceased to exist," a "restless protection of power, which none disputed." "If Ivan was Russia's executioner, he was at the same time his own hangman."

This interpretation by A. K. Tolstoy was based on the historians' views which prevailed in the 19th century. Those had been most clearly expressed by Karamzin in his well-known *History of the Russian State* (1815).

Karamzin regarded Ivan Grozny as a "furious bloodsucker", a "tiger". All his sympathies lay with Ivan's "innocent victims"—the boyars.

Soviet historiography has completely discarded this point of view. In Ivan's actions it sees not only his own will, but a manifestation of historical necessity.

This new opinion formed the corner-stone for two recent Soviet plays about Ivan Grozny *Ivan Grozny* (1944) by A. N. Tolstoy, and *The Great Tsar* (1945) by Vladimir Solovyov. The same also determines the nature of Selvinsky's *The Livonian War*. According to this interpretation, the creation of a powerful, unified Russian State in the middle of the 16th century was a historical necessity. All economic, political or personal tendencies which opposed it had to be ruthlessly suppressed.

Thus Ivan emerges as an outstanding and progressive statesman, aware of his mission, and justified not only in the eyes of his contemporaries, but in the eyes of posterity.

The Livonian War may be called a philosophical dramatic poem. Philosophical, because Selvinsky solves a philosophical problem posed definitely and frankly; a poem, because the media used by the author are largely instruments of lyrical poetry.

It is a well-known fact that not only west-European, but pre-revolutionary Russian historiography as well usually considered the history of the Russian nation as a thing apart from the world history. This outlook prevented a sufficiently profound understanding of various events and the influence which the progress of Russia had upon the entire life of Europe.

To Selvinsky the period of Ivan IV—the 16th century—is, primarily, an age of universal historical rejuvenation and revival. New sea routes were being explored and bonds between nations were growing and strengthening.

Russia endeavoured to take part in the general European process of social and cultural rejuvenation, known as the Renaissance. But the Livonian Order prevented the rapprochment between Russia and the West: for more than four centuries this Order locked Russia's exit to the sea.

Ivan IV's struggle for the sea—the Livonian War—was, as Selvinsky understands it, not only a vital military, economic, and political problem, which confronted Russia in the 16th century, but also a struggle between the progressive forces in European history and the sinister forces, hostile to human progress.

In Selvinsky's tragedy Ivan is a man, whose creative genius understood the grandeur and inevitability of his nation's goal, a man, who devoted himself heart and soul to its attainment.

Everything else fades before this effort to reach the sea. A drop of Baltic Sea water rouses Ivan almost into ecstasy, and for him there is no drink more "inebriating." A lyrical theme of the sea permeates the entire play, determining its colour, its rhythm.

In *The Livonian War* Ivan is depicted as a man of great inspiration, living a complex and tense inner life.

In the eyes of his immediate associates, his inspired spirit renders him ascetic, almost terrifying. "You are as awe-inspiring as God from off the ikon," says Maria Staritskaya to Ivan. "People don't love men like you."

The spirit of Ivan in the play in no way contradicts the character of Ivan Grozny preserved in historical documents. In his correspondence with Kurbsky and in the memoirs of his contemporaries Ivan stands out as a man of fine and intense character. But it was precisely these finer aspects of the Tsar that the historians and writers of the 19th century ignored, and, distorting his genuine portrait, presented him as a man of base nature.

Next to Ivan Grozny, the major character in the play is his favourite Kurbsky, the same who later betrayed the Tsar, and went over to his enemies. Kurbsky, as portrayed by Selvinsky, is not only a traitor, a representative of the boyars, and a defender of their privileges. He is, in all respects, Ivan's antithesis. He is an ambitious individualist, thirsting for power and ready to commit any crime to acquire it. The struggle between Kurbsky and Ivan is a duel between two minds and two creeds.

Two historical viewpoints, two trends in philosophy are represented in these figures.

The Livonian War which lasted twenty-four years, began with brilliant victories. The Livonian Order succumbed to Russian blows. Russia regained her seacoast. But success soon gave way to failure and defeat. Poland, Sweden and Denmark waged war on Russia. The enemy invaded the country. At the same time, advancing from the East, the Tatars seized and razed Moscow, the capital of the state.

Russia soon recovered from these blows, but the old historians, recording these facts, drew the conclusion that Ivan's reign ended in catastrophe. In their view, all the sufferings, which the Tsar caused his people, were in vain, as was the blood of the victims sacrificed in the war. They ignored the vital fact that Tsar Ivan's policy crushed for ever the might of the feudal boyars and resulted in the building up of a powerful, centralized Russian State, able to withstand these and other severe trials. In the eyes of the old historians Tsar Ivan was merely a madman, one who violated the former stable order, and "bowed to the sea instead of the church."

This was how A. K. Tolstoy presented the problem in his famous tragedy. This is how Kurbsky considers upon Ivan's activity in Selvinsky's poem.

Kurbsky sees nothing beyond the fact that the sea remained in the enemy's hands and that Moscow was burnt by the Tatars.

But Ivan IV knows that the heavy withdrawals, losses, failures which pave the way of history, are inevitable. The sea, once won but later lost by Ivan "will be embedded in the memory of the Power, just as if it were imprinted on the soul."

Tsar Ivan was a predecessor of Peter the Great and of those Russian rulers, who in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries fought for the sea frontiers of Russia, so that it could participate in European life and European progress. Ivan's tragedy is an optimistic tragedy in the eyes of the

playwright, because this Tsar fought for a cause, which history was to justify.

Even Ivan's opponent, Kurbsky, subconciously acknowledges his greatness. Considering himself a victor, seeking vindication of his right in everything that is taking place, Kurbsky cannot suppress the feeling that Ivan is nevertheless greater than he. "Great you are, Majesty! Oh, how great! I could never accomplish what you have done," exclaims Kurbsky.

In *The Livonian War* there is yet another figure, Eric XIV, presented as a contrast to Ivan. The very idea of introducing this hero of Strindberg's well-known drama into the play was very fortunate. He, Eric XIV, forms the link between Russian history and that of Europe.

It is for Eric that the Swedish nobles dethrone his brother Ivan Redbeard, and cast him into a dungeon. But Eric himself is another victim in the hands of feudal nobles. Courtiers deliberately drive him to madness, wanting to turn him into their obedient instrument. They place Person as Eric's secretary, who excites his passion for wine and extinguishes in him the last ounce of reason. Eric experiences horrifying nightmares. He imagines that it is he, and not his brother, who is thrown into prison, and that he is turned into a wolf. He cries over his own fate, and when Person plies him with more wine, he quietens down.

The tragic figure of Eric symbolizes a victim of the dark, destructive forces of the Middle Ages—those forces against which Ivan wages his struggle. Eric's fate is the possible fate of Ivan himself, should the latter succumb to the power of the boyars, the Russian "Persians." And Eric instinctively sympathizes with Ivan. "When my red-bearded Hans kicks me out, I'll live in Moscow," he dreams.

In judging the tragedy as a whole, however, one notes that the author is somehow limited in his treatment of the subject. Selvinsky concentrates on Russia's struggle for an outlet to the sea to the extent that it overshadows all other tendencies of the period.

Characters, representing the people, are not very convincing either. Artisan Chokhov, for example, is supposed to embody Russian zeal, love, reason, and tolerance. But these features are largely decorative. Chokhov is taken up with the idea of casting a gun, which would exceed foreign weapons in size and craftsmanship. This keynote is primitive and the popular characters become somewhat "clichè".

No better success is another popular character—Cherkashenin. The Cossack "ataman" should, according to the author's idea, symbolize the broadness and integrity of the Russian nature. Selvinsky here accepted the traditional attitude. His Cherkashenin becomes a trivial "bogatyr" with his "three score height" and "extraordinary might."

The failure in creating strong popular characters comes from the author's general tendency towards the abstract treatment of his personages. It is true that at times he endeavours to "give a Shakespearean truth," to mix the high with the low. He introduces a folk scene in the tavern and then boldly transfers the action into a Russian bathhouse.

But these touches of realism do not constitute the main trend of the play. Its chief interest lies in the attempt to create a poetic philosophical tragedy based on historical material. Selvinsky is at his best when he resorts to poetry. The tragedy is written in blank verse, of which the poet is a master.

Selvinsky skillfully wove into it archaic words and expressions which take us back to bygone days.

YURI YUSHIN

A NEW ENGLISH *LIFE OF TOLSTOY*

The remarkable success enjoyed by the English wartime edition of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the radio adaptation of that novel over the B.B.C., the numerous Tolstoy's articles featured by the press of the English-speaking countries are all ample evidence of the renewed popularity of the greatest of Russian writers in the West. Moreover, the fact that Derrick Leon's *Tolstoy, His Life and Work* has run into three editions since its first appearance in March 1944, is justification enough for its publication, despite the numerous monographs on Tolstoy that already exist in the English language, notably, Aylmer Maude's brilliant biography. Westerners of our generation have found much that is new and interesting in Tolstoy's characters while the events of the World War have revived world interest in Russia, her people and her culture.

To the Russian reader, however, Derrick Leon's *Tolstoy* is a disappointment. He provides a wealth of factual material and an excellent bibliography. The book is well illustrated—all this, however, merely accentuates the poor handling and misunderstanding of the subject.

The title-page with its quotation from Nietzsche leaves us aghast—the very juxtaposition of the names of Tolstoy and Nietzsche is an insult to the former. Good taste alone should have prevented the author from introducing one of the world's greatest humanists through the medium of the seer and songster of German imperialism!

The more we read Derrick Leon, the greater our disappointment. He seems to know most of the English and French critics who have tackled Tolstoy but the Russians have been completely ignored. We cannot imagine a Soviet literary critic writing a treatise on Dickens or Shakespeare without drawing copiously from the works of British writers; were a writer foolhardy enough to attempt such a thing he would certainly never find a publisher in the Soviet Union.

Derrick Leon seems to have made a painstaking study of Tolstoy's works and of his foreign critics and biographers; at any rate

his own book condenses what has been said about Tolstoy by many former writers.

What the Russian reader expects when he delves into a foreign book on a Russian writer is a critical appreciation of his work seen through Western eyes,a comparison with Western writers and an estimate of his importance in world literature. Even though we do not agree with many of the views expressed we nevertheless regard this type of criticism to be the most valuable feature of Stephen Zweig's works on Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, of André Mason on Goncharov, of Middleton Murray on Dostoyevsky, or William Gerhardy on Chekhov. Derrick Leon, however, has nothing new to add and no opinion of his own to express. He merely rehashes old material well known to the Russian and English reader alike.

There is a tendency towards sensation which develops as one reads more farther on in the book, a sort of predilection for minute and unimportant details more suitable for the columns of a Sunday newspaper. His main characterization of the background of Tolstoy's early years is a repetition of the ancient and unsavoury tale of the Russian landowner who sent a serf to bed to feed the bugs before putting up a guest for the night.

There is an astonishing disproportion between Leon's treatment of the rich inner life of Tolstoy's early years and the space he devotes to worldly pleasures and revels.

The same is true of the chapter on Tolstoy's early married life where Leon seems to have deliberately selected passages from diaries and letters indicating a growing discord. This builds up gradually until, in the last chapters, we are treated to the minutest details of Tolstoy's domestic drama that are worthless to the literary student and of little interest to the reader.

Derrick Leon is a poor biographer. He relates facts on which he does not or cannot comment and makes no effort at distinguishing what is of primary importance from the mass of material that is not. Tolstoy does not stand out in these pages, we do not get a real picture of his character either as a man or a writer. In fact the creative personality of Tolstoy seems to be a closed book to Leon. Take the following example: Leon discovers an analogy between Berg, a self-satisfied but insignificant careerist, a minor character in *War and Peace*, and young Tolstoy with his ambitious dreams. Despite Tolstoy's concreteness of thought and his keen awareness of the outside world as a whole, Leon says: "It must be remembered that Tolstoy had very little imagination in the sense of being able deliberately to feel and experience what was physically remote from him."

And so the master artist who reviewed the historic past so vividly, who plumbed the unfathomed depths of a woman's soul, who analyzed the innermost thoughts and feelings of people in all walks of life, is, in the opinion of his latest English biographer, a man of "very little imagination."

In general Derrick Leon finds it much easier to make sweeping statements than to explain them. He has a vague feeling that he is dealing with a complex subject. He speaks of the contradictions in the life and mind of Tolstoy, of the changing moods of his youth and the painful searchings of his riper years. But he has no understanding of the finer qualities of Tolstoy the man, the artist and thinker; he does not understand his search for truth, his enjoyment of the full life, his sincerity and fearlessness in the struggle against social evils, his ardent love of nature and his delight in everything that is healthy and robust in man. Nor does Leon understand how the rebel and the advocate of non-violence, the lover of life and the Christian ascetic can be combined in one person. When Derrick Leon is confronted with such problems he falls back on empty formulas; he speaks for example of the "different aspects of Tolstoy's broad Karamazov nature." This is yet another proof that for him Tolstoy remains an enigma.

It is true that Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky were compatriots and contemporaries, both of whom, in the words of Gorky, "focussed the amazed attention of Europe on Russia," and they naturally have features in common—their thirst for justice and their sympathy with the oppressed, motives which underly all Russian classical literature. In their ideas and their methods, however, they are universally recognized as opposites. Derrick Leon skims all this very lightly: by defining Tolstoy as a "Karamazov nature" he includes him with one broad sweeping movement in a class of exotic and inexplicable phenomena and leaves it at that without any further explanation.

Once more we cannot but regret that Derrick Leon has seen fit to ignore all that Tolstoy's countrymen have written about him during the past few decades. Had he studied the Russian critics as well as the foreigners Leon would have been able to find his way amid the labyrinth of contradictions in Tolstoy's views and his writings and would have been able to give the English reader a biography containing an element of novelty and not a tiresome repetition of what he already knows.

Many Russians have written books on Tolstoy but the man who made the deepest analysis of his work and who cast the greatest light on his character was not a professional literary critic, but Vladimir Lenin. Lenin had a great liking for Tolstoy and a deep appreciation of his genius. His few short essays written at different times give us a lucid and complete picture of Tolstoy's art and help us to understand Russian classical literature in general.

Lenin described Tolstoy as "the mirror of the Russian revolution" who reflected the ideas and emotions of the millions of Russian peasants who were beginning to rebel against their masters at the turn of the present century.

"Tolstoy's works," said Lenin, "were the expression of both the strength and the weakness, the might and the limitations, precisely of the peasant mass movement. His heated, passionate and often ruthlessly sharp protest against the state and the police-ridden official Church conveys the sentiments of the primitive peasant democratic masses among whom centuries of serfdom, of official tyranny and robbery and of Church Jesui

sm, deception and chicanery piled up mountains of anger and hatred. . . But the vehement protestant, the passionate accuser, the great critic at the same time manifested in s works a lack of understanding of the cause and of the means of escape from the crisis hich was hovering over Russia such as be- ts only a patriarchal naive peasant. . . ." This is how Lenin explains the contrasts Tolstoy, the sober realism and the Utopn illusions, the passionate denunciations id the abstract doctrine of humanism.

Lenin's essays on Tolstoy have been transted into many languages including Engsh; they have been published in a number works as for example in Jean Freville's *enin and Stalin on Literature and Art* (Paris, 937) and are well known to progressive peoe in the West. Romain Rolland, a writer ho had much in common with Tolstoy, otained a new understanding of that author om Lenin (see his essay *Lenine: l'Art et Action.*)

Judging by the editorial notices concern- g his book, Derrick Leon is the author a serious work on Proust and is something a student of modern French literature. ie Freville collection of essays and Romain olland's *Compagnons de Route* (Paris, 1937) em to have escaped his notice, however. e could, of course, have learned of Lenin's says on Tolstoy from other sources since ey are referred to constantly by Soviet writ- on the subject; during the last twenty thirty years Lenin's interpretation of istoy and his work has become the one st generally accepted in Russia.

We do not wish to imply that had he been quainted with them Leon would necessarily ve agreed with Lenin's views. He could ve discounted them but, ignore them, no. hen a Western writer produces a critical rk on the Russian classic without taking dern Russian views into account he risks ating a work that is provincial in its narwness.

Even without being acquainted with the ssian scholars who have studied Tolstoy, on could have got a better understanding his subject had he tried to connect Toly's creative art with the life of his people, th his environment and his epoch.

Aylmer Maude, who did not subscribe to rxist-Leninist principles, made a good empt to see Tolstoy from this angle. True ough Maude's *Life of Tolstoy* contains a mber of debatable points and even errors on the whole his book is the work of a ious investigator. Without having read in, Maude's serious approach to his maial enabled him to see that in his democratstrivings and the force of his denuncian Tolstoy is akin to the Russian revolun which was growing and gathering force ughout the period of Tolstoy's life.

Tolstoy," said Aylmer Maude, "an older n of strong character and with definite views of his own, could not join the socialist movement, but that he was indirectly influenced by it is beyond doubt. The state of Russian life was such that men of sensitive conscience could not be at rest . . . and the work Tolstoy had already done marked him out as one in whose soul the struggle stirring others would assuredly be fought out strenuously." (Aylmer Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy*, vol. I, page 383, London, 1929.) This is how Maude explains such works as *What Then Are We To Do?* and *Resurrection*; the strength of the artist lay in his reflecting in himself and his art the struggle that was "stirring others" and which was the motive force of life in Russia at that time. In the words of Lenin—the great sea that was the people stirred to its uttermost depths, with all its weaknesses and all its strong sides, was reflected in the teachings of Tolstoy. We cannot possibly understand Tolstoy divorced from this "great sea that was the people.

It is a fact that in the 19th and 20th centuries Russia, preparing herself for the revolution, produced a literature whose progressive ideas, moral purity and responsive approach to man have won it world renown. Tolstoy was the greatest exponent of the fundamental traditions of Russian literature—realism, humanism and the national spirit. Only on Russian soil could a modern realistic writer have flourished who faced the cardinal questions of life with such inexorable sharpness and truthfulness, and who could combine the outlook of a European intellectual with the freshness and integrity of soul of a man from the people.

When we understand this we know why Tolstoy's work had such a great influence on his contemporaries abroad. All that Derrick Leon can do in recognition of this fact, however, is to throw out a casual remark or two—"Not a little of Shaw's earlier work was influenced both by Tolstoy's dramatic method and his ideas," "Tolstoy anticipated the development of the modern Western novel, free from the conventional trammels of a plot." These are merely isolated and unconvincing remarks, for Leon, owing to his lack of understanding of the character and essence of Tolstoy's art, is unable to explain his influence on Western literature and his significance for Western readers.

Here is what a non-Russian critic wrote on the occasion of the appearance of the new edition of *War and Peace*: "All Russia's literary giants found their inspiration among the people. . . *War and Peace* is very timely for more than one reason but the most vital message so far as our own novelists are concerned is in the relation of the king of realism to his countrymen." *(Saturday Review of Literature*, 17th October, 1942.)

If this very true thought had been fully grasped by the author of the present biography his book would have been much more readable.

TAMARA MOTYLEVA

A New Book by Constantine Simonov

Constantine Simonov. *From the Barents to the Black Sea.* Part 4. *Soviet Writer* Publishing House. 261 pages.

As in the first three volumes, the essays and stories contained in Part 4 were written while the author served as war correspondent for the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star).

The author has the knack of accurately describing the fighting scene. The reader visualizes the huge pill-boxes of the Mannerheim Line captured by Russian soldiers in Finland, the river forced in pitch darkness by Russian infantry, and the bridge thrown over the Dnieper by Russian sappers under a deluge of enemy fire. Simonov displays his heroes amid the daily war routine, neither exaggerating their services nor overpraising their personal qualities.

Reading Simonov's essays we again traverse the difficult paths of war and again receive stirring flashes from its panorama. . . "A wet dawn. A wood in which the men are lying flat. Overcoming inhuman fatigue and with the method and precision of ingrained habit, they let the enemy tanks come right up and then pelt them with grenades. Though on the threshold of death, all are completely engrossed in their duty. They are more than usually considerate towards each other. "War's a tough business," thinks one of the men. "Can't hurt a fellow's feelings. A rough word today and tomorrow it's too late to say 'sorry'."

And alongside this scene of humaneness, tenacity and courage comes a close-up of *A Fascist Death Camp.* All we know now of German concentration camps from hundreds of documents, court evidence, from the Nürnberg trial has all been concentrated into this short story by Simonov. Before the reader passes the whole history of the Maidanek Camp. He visualizes the life and regulations of that town of the doomed, that monstrous death factory.

In his book Simonov shows how the horror into which fascism plunged humanity is countered by the will of Russia, by the will of all the nations possessing the spirit of resistance and love of liberty.

Just this is expressed by the hero of the tale *Sergeant Yereshchenko.* This story describes the fighting in Belgrade where the Red Army men had to storm house after house. Russian soldiers sacrificed their lives to restore life to the capital of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavs hailed them as an army of liberators.

"I saw the sergeant," says the author, winding up his story, "limping along on his wounded leg. With him strode two partisans, affectionately regarding him. People coming the other way doffed their hats to him, clapped him on the back, spoke to him in their own language and enthusiastically shook his hand."

Through Simonov's book runs that "presentiment of the bright future which suffering Europe yearned for and awaited so long."

Russian Officers and Men

Venyamin Kaverin. *The Cottage on the Hill.* Moscow.

The stories in this collection are concerned with the grim and difficult period of the first two years of the Patriotic War. Based on notes made at the front, these stories reflect the intonations of men relating their experiences to the correspondent. But these are no mere newspaper reportage. Kaverin has the knack of turning the description of an action or a mere ambulance run into real literature. The reader is gripped and moved by the warmth and affection with which the author speaks of his heroes.

Kaverin's stories are very short but right from the start he wins the reader's affection for his heroes, anxiety for their safety and joy at their success. . . The naval officer shelling his own home because the enemy is using it as an observation post; four young sailors engaging five tanks and knocking them out; the girl medical orderly, who, during a bombardment, twice passes through the zone of fire to bring water to her wounded . . all these are typical Soviet people in Kaverin's stories.

With a few quick but deft touches—a nickname, mannerism of speech, appearance—the author presents unforgettable and realistic images of his heroes.

Kaverin's book is a model of the difficult genre of the ultra-short story.

Siberia in the 16th and 17th centuries

Leonid Martynov. *A Tale of Tobolsk Frontier Post.* Omsk. 99 pages.

Leonid Martynov is a Siberian poet who has recently become well known, particularly for his collection of poems *Little Bay* published in Moscow in 1944. *A Tale of Tobolsk Frontier Post* is his first attempt at prose. It is "poet's prose" distinguished by the serious attention given to words. The book consists of five historical tales, linked by a common theme and chronological order. The theme deals with Russia's conquest of Siberia and the history of Tobolsk. The first story describes how the enterprising Danila Chulkov who set out from Moscow in 1597, started the fortifications that later became Tobolsk. The second and third stories unfold the picture of the Russian settlers' penetration into Siberia and their relations with the native tribes. The policy of Boris Godounov, the Moscow tsar, is very interestingly and expressively displayed. Himself of Tatar origin, the Tsar knew well how to steer his course, how to cope with the peculiarities of the Eastern tribes. Martynov also pictures the elemental flight of "runaway peasants" escaping from the oppression of landlords to the newly discovered free-lands beyond the Urals. They wanted

nly to till the land untrammelled. The loughed the virgin soil and initiated the na-ives into the art of farming. This laid the oundation of Siberia's progress. Mangaleya, thriving trading town arose, to disappear ater and then to become nowadays an ob-ect of interest to archeologists. Tobolsk be-ame the centre of Siberia.

The last two stories deal with two authors f manuscripts which still form the main ource of Siberian history. The first of these, rince Ivan Katyrev, was a man of erudition or his times, a former Moscow courtier who as exiled to Tobolsk in the first quarter f the 17th century. The author zealously ursues his life which lacked nothing in xcitement and misadventure. He writes with ven greater zest about Semyon Remezov 662—1715), a native of Tobolsk, a traveller, riter and artist, the first cartographer of iberia and the builder of the new Tobolsk stone. This was a man of a new type who tracted the attention of Peter the Great. he Tsar summoned Remezov to Moscow r instructions. Remezov's activities after s visit to Moscow are characteristic of e new period in Siberia's culture, bringing in line with the general process of Russia's ltural advance.

Martynov has based his tales on manu-ripts from which he sometimes quotes. The avour of old Russian (and he has thoroughly astered it) adds colour to his own text. artynov is a great partisan of his native iberia—a feature reflected in his book.

Tales of Soviet Patriots

Vassili Ilyenkov. *The Power of the Idea. The tate Military Publishing House.* Moscow. pages.

This is a miniature collection containing ly three tales linked by a common theme: hat is the source of the Red Army man's urage, a courage that saved the world from e horrors of fascist slavery?

In the title story young Lieutenant Vo-nov, taking over from a wounded officer, tonishes veterans by his fury in a bayonet arge. They try to get him to explain him-lf. Every one of the men has suffered from e Germans: one has had his native village rned down, another's sweetheart has been iven off to Germany. By comparison Vo-nov seems a lucky fellow, his family hasn't en directly injured by the war. What then used his burning hatred of the Germans? e soldiers learn the reason from a man who ew Lieutenant Voronov before the war. e went out to fight for his own idea, one t expressed by V. Korolenko's saying: an was made for happiness as the bird for ght.' Voronov hates the Germans because y want to deprive mankind of the right free progress, want to take away the right happiness from all men, except the "chos-master race." Ilyenkov shows that when get down to rock bottom this is the gener-motive actuating all Red Army men bat-g against fascist Germany.

aptain Kazantsev is the hero of the second y, *On the Further Bank.* Pressing d to rescue his own family whom the Ger-ns have driven off to slavery, he cleaves way forward hundreds of miles and res-cues dozens of civilians from the German slave columns. When his battalion reach the sea and can go no farther, his family is still missing. He consoles himself, however, with the thought of Vakhrameyev, a collective farmer, who sacrificed his log hut so that the battalion could cross the river on its logs.

"That's the law of life: like Vakhrameyev, somebody should sacrifice his home so that on its logs people may reach the other bank."

The third tale *Luck* is about an airman who retains his wings even when a major wound seems to have pinned him to earth for ever. It is a story of an all-conquering will-power. Its hero, like the heroes of the preceding sto-ries, battles for the welfare and happiness for which man was made "as the bird was made for flight."

Ilyenkov's stories acquire the character of an ideological and artistic generalization of the basic factors in the Soviet man psy-chology.

Poet in the Forces

Alexander Tvardovsky. *Front-Line Jour-nal.* Poems 1942-1944. *Soviet Writer* Pub-lishing House. Moscow. 65 pages.

Tvardovsky, well known for his poem about the Soviet soldier, *Vassili Terkin*, is one of the poets who during the war devoted all their strength and energy to the front. He spent the greater part of the war in the fighting line. One of the central pictures of the book are the roads near the front, and the highway skirting the forward positions, where life bustles but in a way altogether different from all normal peacetime activity. Staff vans and lorries roll back and forth, passing units salute each other, wounded are brought on stretchers or helped along, con-voys of prisoners trudge by; mirth and laugh-ter mingle with sorrow and death.

The "big summer" of 1944 arrives. The front-line road is transformed by the change

A. Tvardovsky

in the fortunes of war; the Soviet armies go over to their triumphant offensive. The verses of *The Minsk Highway* describe how all roads lead west as the army pours along them, tingling with overwhelming confidence in victory. *The Grave of Glory* deals with the retreat of 1941; how soldiers bury their fallen commander and bitterly leave his grave. Then 1944 . . . the men return driving westward—brief halt at the familiar burial mound and off in pursuit of the enemy. In place of the towns the men had left they find ruins. . . "A desert waste, sombre and lifeless," says the author of Smolensk, one of the most badly devastated towns (*In Smolensk*). But the men are most affected by the fate of the people who fell under the fascist sway.

The men hear of the Germans' violence and bloodthirsty atrocities with horror and tight-lipped rage. They listen to an old peasant's account of how the Germans robbed and murdered his wife (*The Old Man's Story*). They swear to do their duty as soldiers and citizens, swear to conquer the foe.

Stories of Soviet Geologists

Ivan Efremov. *The White Horn. The Young Guard* Publishing House, Moscow. 250 pages.

This book is by Professor Efremov who has set out to popularize various branches of science. In attractive story-book style he traces the history of several modern discoveries, in practically all of which formidable obstacles had to be overcome.

The book contains eight short stories about young Soviet scientists prospecting in the so far little known mountains of Central Asia.

The preface facing the title page reveals the guiding idea behind the stories: "I am sure that those who think adventure will have no place on our planet are badly mistaken. A boundless field for exploration lies all around us. After a single peep at it one realizes how ridiculous to say that life is dull. An all-round knowledge of nature and creative labour are the wings of the human spirit."

The young scientists who serve as the author's heroes have one feature in common: love of adventure, the urge to action even at the risk of one's life.

The hero of the first story, *The White Horn*, is Usoltsev, a young geologist in charge of an expedition to Central Asia. He complains bitterly that he, the tireless, dogged explorer of the Tyan-Shan mountains, is baulked by peak "White Horn" in the Akh-Miunguz range, where, according to all the data, there should be rich deposits of tin. He is not at all consoled by his comrade's assurances that even expert alpinists have failed to scale this summit.

After painful vacillations Usoltsev decides to make the attempt. His resolution is fortified by the poetic legend, told him by a local guide, about the first vanquisher of the "White Horn," A brave warrior, the story runs, was faced with this task in order to free his beloved from the Khan. He risks his life several times but reaches the summit of the "White Horn." Here he leaves a golden dagger as proof of his success. Cheered by the story, Usoltsev leaves unaccompanied at dawn for the foothills of Akh-Miunguz. . . By midday, after an incredibly difficult climb he manages to reach the summit; there he finds immense deposits of tin-bearing rock and also a golden dagger, evidently the one left there by the hero of the legend. With even greater difficulty, but elated by success, he makes the descent.

Major Lebedev, the hero of the story *The Observatory at Nur-i-Desht*, was a geologist until the war. The tale opens with him, very depressed, bound for a sanatorium in Central Asia. At a wayside station he meets Tanya, a post-graduate student of the Tashkent Institute of Eastern Languages. The girl's attractive description of the places where she is going to work leads Lebedev to abandon his ideas of the sanatorium. He joins the expedition of which Tanya is a member, headed by Professor Matvei Andreyevich, the archeologist.

The story aptly conveys the enthusiasm of the tiny handful of people as they set to work, studying the remains of the ancient observatory.

The name of the observatory—Nur-i-Desht (Light of the Desert), the exceptional rarity of the air, and a queer iridescence at night suggest to Lebedev that there must be radioactive minerals present. He sets to work as a geologist should and is successful: the hill where the observatory once stood is made of quartzites, emanating the rays of that still little known element, radium.

In the course of the story, Lebedev, originally a somewhat gloomy, uncommunicative fellow, oppressed by his war experiences, becomes a sociable, lively and cheerful young man, filled with the zest of discovery. The opportunity for creative effort and the wild beauty of the countryside in Central Asia help bring about the good change.

Beauty of language, an attractive form of story-telling, the author's own familiarity with the strange loveliness of Central Asia, and the lofty idea linking the stories into an artistic whole, make this a very interesting collection.

The Recent Past of Czechoslovakia

František Langer. *The Children and the Dagger. State Literary Publishing House.* Moscow. Russian translation A. Gurovich, 157 pages.

Langer's story describes the year 1939 in Czechoslovakia. The Nazi hordes invade the land. But the people of this small Slav country do not submit to the "accomplished fact". From the very first day of the occupation the Czechs and Slovaks begin a fierce underground struggle.

After two years of major sabotage (train wrecks and explosions at the mines) in the industrial region of Kladno, the Germans resolve to use schoolchildren in the attempt to discover the patriots. A new schoolteacher is appointed, a Gestapo officer already decorated with the Nazi "Dagger of Honour" for past "services".

He sets about his business with truly devilish skill; he does everything to win the confidence of the children; in a cunningly conceived game he gets the boys to say things dooming their parents to death; he weaves the web unceasingly until it is finally com-

lete . . . but at the crucial moment one of he lads, less credulous than the rest, catches ight of his "Dagger of Honour." At night the oy breaks into the master's room to steal is notes. A brief struggle takes place in the ark and the Gestapo agent falls dead, pierc- d by his own dagger.

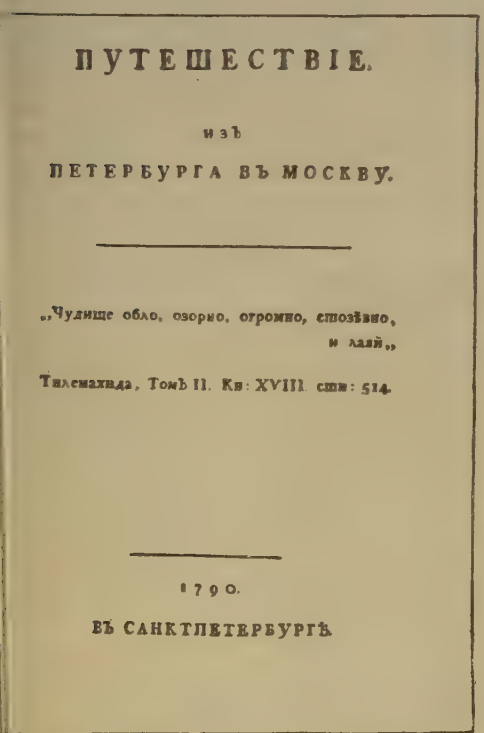
The small Czech village is inundated with ierman troops and police; high Gestapo offi- ials arrive to deal with the situation. They uspect the boys some of whom are threatened vith a dreadful sentence while others are romised a "pardon" in the form of despatch o Germany. There is a danger that some may ive away the secret under torture. And it s then that one of the villagers, an old sol- ier with no family, who fought the Germans n the World War I, "confesses" that he is the ssassin. The most ingenious attempts to get im entangled at the cross-examination fail. nd the Gestapo passes sentence: the old nan is hanged on the village green.

A Revolutionary Writer of the 18th Century

Dmitri Blagoy. *Alexander Nikolayevich Ra- ishchev. Stalin Banner* Publishing House. enza. 67 pages.

An excellent style and able choice of facts nake this small book a valuable contribu- ion to the critical literature on Radishchev, hat outstanding Russian writer of the end f the 18th century. His chief work, *A Journey rom Petersburg to Moscow* was the first attack y any writer on tsarist tyranny.

The author divides his book into three hapters: *The Man, The Book, The Fate of he Book.*



ПУТЕШЕСТВІЕ.

ИЗЪ

ПЕТЕРБУРГА ВЪ МОСКВУ.

„Чудище обло, озорно, огромно, стозѣвно, и лаяй„

Телемахида, Томъ II. Кн: XVIII. стих: 514.

1790.

ВЪ САНКТПЕТЕРБУРГѢ.

itle page of the first edition of A Journey om Petersburg to Moscow, *by Radishchev*

In drawing the portrait of Radishchev the man, the author shows how his revolutionary views were formed. Dwelling on his childhood he describes the exceptional influence his nurses and servants had on the future writer. They fostered in the child a passionate love of the Russian people, of their traditions, language, songs, a profound commiseration for the slave lot of the people and hatred for their oppressors.

The reading of Rousseau's *The Social Agreement* as a student helped Radishchev to find a historical foundation for hostility to the tsarist tyranny in the conception of the sovereignty of the people.

Radishchev's life was tragic. Empress Catherine II imprisoned him in the Peter and Paul Fortress. Under torture Radishchev was forced to renounce his views; then the court sentenced him to death, but this was commuted to exile in Siberia. Finally, intolerable oppression and persecution drove Radishchev to suicide.

In his article analyzing *A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* D. Blagoy stresses the chief feature: the realistic portrayal and condemnation of serfdom in Russia.

Blagoy points out that in his book Radishchev has treated the social problems of his day (problems of religion, training, rights, ethics, etc.) in the spirit of the most advanced revolutionary ideas of the 18th century.

Finally the last chapter deals with the influence of Radishchev's book on the progress of enlightened ideas in Russia and on the revolutionaries of the 19th century.

A Classic Soviet Film

Ilvan Dolinsky. *Chapayev.* Drama. *State Cinema Publishing House.* Moscow. 175 pages.

The film *Chapayev*, after the novel of the same name by Furmanov, was an important milestone in the history of the Soviet cinema. This book reveals just how the film was made by the directors, the brothers Vassiliev, and the actors.

The author explains that he chose that film for analysis because it most clearly manifests the solution of the new problems which confronted the Soviet cinema art at the beginning of the thirties, namely, the change over from the portrayal of events, to the portrayal of the people who guided the Soviet system to victory.

And the film really does show the gradual development of Chapayev; his transformation from the semi-literate partisan leader of the steppe into the politically conscious Red Army commander.

The author also compliments the producers on their success in typifying the various characters. Chapayev is the generalized character of the Red Army commander who emerged from the masses during the Civil War.

The book also reveals the endeavour put into building up the other characters of the film. Altogether the reader gets a balanced picture of the production of the film as a whole, beginning with the scenario until the final mounting of the shots.

The book has many photographs illustrating the process of work on the part of the producers and actors.

GOLOVIN AND HIS THEATRE

Alexander Golovin made his appearance in the theatre at the beginning of the century when fresh ideas and a new search for artistic truth were just blazing a trail. He died fifteen years ago, when Russian theatrical decorative art had, thanks to his achievements, met with general recognition.

Golovin belonged to a group of artists named "Mir Iskusstva" (World of Art). In company with these connoisseurs of style and bygone art he distinguished himself by his knowledge and his profound individual attitude to the work of past days.

At a recent exhibition we have renewed our acquaintance with Golovin's work, have recalled old half-forgotten performances, the artist's last achievements, already rarely seen in the pre-war theatre.

Much has changed since Golovin's days and some features of his style are now mainly of historic interest. His decorative forms seem too fragile. His "festive" style is for us only one, and by no means the essential, aspect of the theatre. Nevertheless it is now clear that Golovin was the first and the most accomplished master of a new art of stage ensemble. His designs open up an enchanting world of decorative art.

One does not always find oneself in agreement with this artist. In Ostrovsky's *Storm* the portrayal of an old and stagnant mode of life by the use of brightly painted chests and multi-coloured carpets makes it difficult to imagine the "dark realm[1]" of the Russian provincial merchants behind this alien beauty.

In the wonderful designs for *Eugene Onegin* the modest garden of a landlord's estate is reminiscent of the green wall in the fairy tale which hedged in the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. The cruel truth of human passions exposed by Lermontov's *Masquerade* is dimmed by superfluous decoration. Today we view this tragedy in the light of a stern and truthful Rembrandtesque approach.

This may be explained by the inevitable influence of the period. Sometimes, however, and often in the same productions, side by side with such designs are works of genuine penetrating feeling. Golovin's sound taste and wide experience, his profound knowledge of styles and, primarily, his devotion to the theatre protected him from mannerism. He was drawn to poetic picturesqueness. His creative gifts were nourished by dramatic literature and music.

Embellishing the proscenium as the actor's foreground and advancing it, he concentrated his scenery backstage, cleverly subduing his colours in the interests of the players, the general ensemble and artistic truth. Golovin held that the artist was all-powerful in the theatre. His impatience with the use of ready-made properties, even museum period-pieces is well known. Everything connected with the actor or his surroundings must conform to theatrical laws, laws which permit no imitations. The artist must determine the degree of historical or present day realism required in the design of costume, stage properties and décor. He controls the metamorphosis of the theatre, the transforming of weight into lightness by the employment of colour tension and expressive form. He freely enlarges the stage borders enriching it with hues of the near and far distance.

[1] A reference to the well-known article about this play by the critic Dobrolyubov, called *A Ray of Light in the Dark Realm.*

Model set for Ostrovsky's drama The Storm. *By Golovin*

Like the masters of classical painting who never used the rules of perspective mechanically, Golovin encloses his scenic pictures within a frame, attains harmony of costumes and décor and clearly divides his stage into main planes. The first of these belongs to the actor and everything concerning him; the second contains the stage scenery characterizing the scene of action. All the rest are only links, the wings directing the eye backstage and creating a bridge which spans the world of the actors to the images of the theatrical artist.

"It seems to me," Golovin wrote, "that one should distinguish between two totally different types of painting, figure painting and landscape painting. Each needs a different method, style and approach. Semiradsky does not make this distinction: consequently his landscapes and figures appear to be composed of the same material. That a complete distinction between figure and landscape is possible is demonstrated successfully in Alexander Ivanov's work of genius: *The Coming of the Messiah.*" Golovin purposely referred to this remarkable Russian artist whose creative work resembled that of a theatre artist and whose attitude was constantly concerned with the intimate relation between actor and background. For Golovin every great master is primarily the creator of his own "theatre" which produced the myths, legends and dramas of all time and all lands.

Only the actor gives life to the theatre, maintained this artist whom his contemporaries quite unjustly reproached with encroaching on the actor's rights.

It needs to be remembered that before Golovin and the whole "Mir Iskusstva" group, scenic decoration for opera and drama still preserved the false frivolous style of the Second Empire, with German pedantry in the design of architectural perspectives combining with a French-inspired tendency towards pomp or superficial smartness. It was a period of whimsically distorted Gothic, Moorish and Barocco styles copied year in, year out, from same models in Paris, Vienna and Moscow. In the dramatic theatres, it was the era of the standard set and the landscape back-cloth which served all purposes. There was, however, one more type of stage decoration, derived from the tradition of "tableaux vivants." For gala performances the stage was decorated with hothouse plants and fresh flowers, carpets and the luxurious contents of palaces. Fountains, waterfalls and all the naturalistic components of these "living pictures" were placed incongruously among the conventional illusions of perspective painting.

When, in 1907, Dyagilev acquainted Paris with the new achievements of Russian stage artists, Maurice Denis exclaimed: "This is real colour! This is true decoration!" This was a genuine triumph in a field where the French had laid down the law ever since the deterioration of Italian decorative art.

Now, when many of the discoveries of Golovin and his group have become deeply rooted in the theatre and are generally accepted, it is timely to remind ourselves of their merits. They were a group of passionate amateurs of the theatre who, if although not wholeheartedly supporting Golovin's belief in the great importance and significance of theatrical art, yet were his close comrades, and with him hold an important part in the history of the Russian theatre. They include C. Korovin, V. Simov, A. Vasnetsov, distinguished for their stage sets in the Russian national style; A. Benois who was unrivalled in his knowledge and appreciation of the style of 18th century France, L. Bakst, E. Lanceret whose work reflected classical Italy, V. Serov under the spell of Greece and the Orient, B. Kustodyev, the vigorous portrayer of Russian provincial life, M. Dobuzhinsky, whose refined lyrical decorative work did full justice to Turgenev's plays, and M. Vroubel, the interpreter of *Faust*. These artists left deep traces in the history of Russian decorative art. Golovin, to the last, remained devoted to the idea of the "festive" theatre. He always enchanted the spectator with silks and brocades, lace and heavy draperies decorated with characteristic curves and his flimsy, swaying curtains. His draperies intruded on the action of the play, determining its rhythm, emphasizing separate mises-en-scenes unfolded and closed by the dictate of the artist, facilitating the technique of quick changes, harmonizing with the costumes or throwing into relief their festive beauty.

Golovin was a genuine poet of theatrical costume. In his sets, costumes served as the principal foundation for colour harmony. He spent much time and care in preparing his dramatic effects and when the course of action moved to its climax, his heroes appeared in costumes of special expressiveness. Then the green tunic or the white cape of an unknown player—in *Masquerade* or a garment of red, black or ash-grey stand out almost symbolically, the colours serving to express human passion.

These new methods of theatrical expression later became the possession of all. But when some artists began to use them in the conventional theatre of masks and symbols, grotesque styles and primitivism, Golovin could not find a mutual language with them. He remained in his beloved realm of "high theatre". Least of all did he find the constructivists to his liking. In his memoirs, the artist shows the inner contradiction of all attempts to force on the stage the arbitrariness of the artist-producer. Golovin neither wished to, nor tolerated the methods of grotesque and deliberate expressionism in the theatre of Shakespeare, Pushkin, Lermontov, Ostrovsky, Mussorgsky and Bizet. Plays that required such treatment failed to interest him. With great persistence he sought new colours and methods for glorifying his beloved characters of dramatic literature and music.

In *The Marriage of Figaro* he places on a revolving stage an entire French park with its trees, shrubberies, arbours, inviting the spectator to accompany the characters on their walks along its paths. Who of the artists of that time, nearly twenty years ago, could match Golovin in this theatrical circular tour, achieved with such devotion to elegance and to delicacy of the drawings of that venerable comedy? No less expressive is the way he employs landscape painting. The sky in the first scene of Ostrov-

Model set for Dargomyzhsky's opera The Stone Guest. *By Golovin*

sky's *The Storm* is indifferent to the Fate of the characters. The fading colours of the summer evening, the drowsy placidity of the river, express with an almost meteorological preciseness, the calm before the storm. In the designs for the second scene of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Pskovityanka* an air of mystery is obtained by the aura of lights on the walls and tulip-domes of the churches in the Trade Square. It is windy, alarming, the night sky is illumined by chill flashes of lightning, and one does not err in sensing that this is a sky for mass scenes, a sky of the people's storm. Golovin is a master of such dramatic descriptions of nature, in which the fate of human beings is expressed and the essential elements in history are exposed.

The representation of interior scenes is a field in which the designer rarely meets with success. The view is accepted almost as a matter of course that interior work for contemporary plays is a thankless task owing to the limited decorative possibilities. However, Golovin's work for the dramas of Ibsen and Hamsun is outstanding. Its merit lies in the fact that Golovin was the first to apply to the theatre the mode of the masters of impressionism; he, so to say, "staged" the colourful gamut of the new painters. The surprising thing is that he was to apply the inventions of contemporary landscape painters to interior scenes, for, after all, what is the theatrical interior but a box with one side removed for the benefit of the spectator!

What can replace the painted background in an interior scene? Golovin invented his light background against which contemporary costumes stood out in bold relief. He replaced white walls with screens flexibly reacting to changes of light. To ease and lighten the enclosed décor of the permanent background he places large windows through which the spectator sees a view of nature. Finally, he enlivens the general picture by illuminating the actors from behind adding thus another touch of reality.

In general, the effect of his treatment of interiors was such as to provide a clear impression of the period in which the play's action takes place.

The action of Ibsen's plays, quite close to our own times, needs to be expressed by altogether different means than those used for classical plays. And so we see the stage lighting intensifying or dimming, tinging the white screen with the colours of day or evening: the characters live in a changing atmosphere attuned to the spirit of psychological drama.

How unfortunate it is that Golovin did not encounter Chekhov's plays in the theatre. In these, his newly discovered principles of interior decoration could have been employed with even greater effect.

In his remarkable designs for *Carmen* executed for the Mariinsky Theatre, Golovin rejected all the extravagances of the operatic style. He showed the Spain of Mérimée, provincial and miserable, unmasked, as he had seen it on his travels. For him *Carmen* was a contemporary musical drama, which seems to justify the painter using a more realistic presentation of the time and place of action. Golovin's designs deriving from this point of view carry conviction since they resemble work painted straight from nature. Nowhere else did he combine so organically the truth of observed life and the truth of the theatre.

An important part of Golovin's creative work was décor for classical plays. It was these, indeed, that brought him fame. In them he gave full expression to this unique responsiveness to all that in the sphere of art might be called poetical reflection of human feelings. The Spain of Don Juan, the visions of Hellas, the dreamy canals of Venice, the fairy landscapes of *Swan Lake*, the elegance of Paris and Cyprus—such are the landmarks, real or imagined, on Golovin's journeys.

Every year he visited Paris, Venice, Florence or Naples. The grey stones of Europe whispered their secrets to him.

Golovin had a special love for Russian opera. In its every touch his décor shows him to be a profound and original analyst of the national artistic heritage. In sketches for Mussorgsky's *Boris Godounov* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Pskovityanka*, the cathedral domes

gleam in their pale gilt, the white stone walls rise high, glorious smoothness replaced by the purple and scarlet chambers of the tsar and golden bright timber houses, by the crowd freely outlined by the painter's brush. All this flows into one broadly proportioned vision of ancient splendour and springs to reality, sometimes serene and festive, sometimes stormy and stern.

Golovin introduced the genuine Russia into the theatre. For him the spirit of Russian history consisted not in the caprices of modern taste nor in swelling barrel-shaped columns and a confusion of bright colours and ornaments, but in sensible simplicity and stern perfection of manners tested by centuries. Rejecting the ideas of the restorers of the previous epoch and turning to the examples of the architecture of Moscow, Pskov and Novgorod, Golovin became one of the pioneers of that broad movement in art which in new ways taught the world the eternal values of the Russian ikon and folk craft. His historical sense and his excursions, very personal and subjective, into the past were least of all marked by narrow scholarship or illustrative ingenuity. He does not collect precise information about style costume and ornament. He makes no parade of his knowledge. He does not approve of museum beauty deliberately and painstakingly copied. He seeks in the atmosphere of ancient towns the habits and trends of a past life. He learns from unknown decorators, wood-carvers, costumiers of the 17th and 18th centuries, and subjects common forms to his understanding of history.

For this reason a different standard of comparison needs to be applied to Golovin, the interesting painter and unoriginal draftsman, and Golovin, the remarkable master of the theatre. In the latter field he stands beside the greatest decorative artists of the past. He resurrected the half-forgotten art of architectural fantasy. His work is linked with the romantic appeal of Piranesi's etchings which treated nature in a theatrical decorative way, as well as with the broad expanses of Gonzago's poems in perspective and with all the creations of the masters of the ancient theatre. He is distinguished from other painters of his time by his serious architectural training. He spent three years in the Architectural Faculty of the Moscow School of Art. His annual journeys broadened his views. He could compete with the older school of decorators on their own ground, but to their rather monotonous and, it must be admitted, necessary art, Golovin brought many new tones which carried it forward to meet the requirements of the contemporary stage.

A superb example of the painter's architectural fantasy is provided by his design for the Palace scene in *Swan Lake*. Two sentiments, two tones are combined in a single vision in this scene. Smoking iron candelabra hang below the castle's dome. Golovin leads the eye backstage with its single column bearing the weight of two arches. Beyond is the dark starlit sky. In all its details the scene is wild, barbaric, and splendid. Had Golovin limited himself, as the old masters did, to a purely plastic representation of the theme, the hall would have had no more than a stern, grim grandeur. But in the warm, brownish-gold colouring of the design, in the sparkling play of light and shade, in the treatment of the column resembling ivory in texture and reminding us of a piece of precious jewellery, he expresses a sense of luxury, of fairyland dreams and of a voluptuousness suitable for ballet.

Two rooms are exhibited in the sketches for the Art Theatre's *Othello*. The first is the solemn council-room of the Doges with a Gothic fireplace, dim windows and piles of documents on the table. Even the gilded ornamentation of walls and ceiling does not soften the atmosphere of ascetic sternness and solemnity of this room.

Othello's room is airy and light. Carved columns placed here and there divide the room, far back is a niche with a divan, above which are windows which, like the doors, are masked with grills. These are pierced by thin green beams that hint of the sea. Compared with the first room, the atmosphere is quite different. Here there is free expanse and the play of the breeze. The room might be the cabin of a ship, located high up above Cyprus. No swords or armour or charts hint at the hero's profession.

In addition there is the feeling experienced when beyond the thin side of a ship and the round porthole, in the bright dawn the glittering movements of the salty waves are brought to one's consciousness by their reflection, enabling one to guess their eternal and youthful play.

So did the master express the spirit of Shakespeare in his last work, finished in 1929. One could continue to analyze it, to compare this bedroom, the scene of Desdemona's death with the one in Lermontov's *Masquerade* where Nina met her end. One could discuss the two interpretations of antiquity in his work, the stern archaic monumental note in Richard Strauss' *Elektra* and the delicate elegiac treatment of Gluck's *Orpheus*. One could compare it with the two Spanish sets of Golovin, for Moliére's *Don Juan* and Pushkin's *Stone Guest*. But I think that enough has been said above to destroy the legend that Golovin was a monotonously "festive" artist.

Golovin's influence on the art of the Russian stage was profound and fruitful. He died in 1930 and thus for more than twelve years he participated in the searchings of Soviet art. His creations were living threads connected with the future development of our theatre.

Vladimir Dimitriev and Alexander Rykov are his followers in the dramatic theatre and, like he, are masters of interior scenes. In their work they combine the desire for realistic truth with the searchings for new means of theatrical impressionism. In opera and ballet where recently there has been a tendency towards the grand style in décor, the master's influence is still stronger. Finally, veteran painters of the Soviet stage, such as Fyodorovsky and Yuon, worked with Golovin during Dyagilev's undertakings and are the direct heirs of his tradition, so fertile for the Soviet theatre.

ALFRED BASSEKHES

THEATRE

THE RUST'VELI THEATRE

Georgia's finest playhouse is named after her national bard, Shota Rust'veli, author of the *Knight in the Tiger's Skin.*

A prominent place in the theatre's repertoire is occupied by plays of Georgian playwrights. Following on Sergo Klouashvili's *The Deer Gorge,* a play reflecting the struggle waged against the Germans in the foothills of the Caucasian Range, the Rust'veli theatre has staged two plays about collective farmers of Georgia.

The Comedy of a Night, a play in verse, is by the poet Karlo Kaladze. Based on the interrelations of the people of a certain collective farm in Georgia, it depicts the united life and efforts of the Soviet front and rear during the war. Choosing the example of the Spanish drama of the Golden Age, Kaladze changes the measure of his verse to suit the inner development of the action. Akaki Vassadze plays the main role of Datuna, an accountant at the farm. A comical, clumsy fellow, and faint-hearted, to judge by outward appearance, Datuna holds up a cleverly disguised German agent, displaying an unexpected fund of courage and resourcefulness in the maneuvre. Vassadze's masterly acting wins the sympathies of the audience. Most attractive, too, is Tamara Chavchavadze playing the role of Datuna's wife.

Under the Willow, a lyrical drama by G. Berdzenishvili, is a story of love, fidelity and friendship, subjected to the acid test of war. The author displays the emotions of his characters without diminishing the dramatic effect, or underrating the hardships which beset the Soviet people during the war.

Khevisberi Gocha, a dramatic poem by Sandro Shanshiashvili, is based on the story of the same title by the Georgian classic, Alexander Kazbeggi. The action takes place against a background of austere natural scenery—a gorge of the river Terek near the summit of Kazbek; the characters are men and women of a simple integrity, manly mountaineers headed by the elder of their tribe, the venerable sage, Gocha. The life and characters of the mountain-dwellers, their ancient festive rites and customs reflecting in their dignity the austere tones of the landscape, are faithfully portrayed. But all this forms only the background to the action which grips the onlooker with its vitality. The play is fittingly mounted by Revaz Gavichvadze's incidental music.

Russian drama is represented by Ostrovsky's famous play: *Enough Stupidity for Every Wise Man.* In their performance the actors display both stagecraft and a delicate insight into the art of Ostrovsky. Especially good is Akaki Vassadze as the veteran General Krutitski who, in the words of the author, has "contrived to reach the age of sixty preserving intact the mind of a child of six."

Such are this season's new productions at the Rust'veli Theatre.

THE DRAMATIC THEATRE IN STALINO (DONBAS)

A highly successful production at this theatre is Alexander Korneichuk's *Come to Dzvonkovoye,* a play vividly illuminating the problems confronting Soviet people on the day after the historic victory over the enemy. There is no definite plot, but action permeated with real life holds the audience spellbound to the end.

"O, yes. . . It's a great thing for a man to weave his own dreams: without this, a man—no matter who he is, or whatever uniform he may wear—is no better than a bird squatting in its marsh and squawking," says Prokop Klyuchka, one of the characters in the play. Prokop is an ardent enthusiast eager to build a new life worthy of a victorious people.

In Anna Grusha, the President of the Village Soviet, in Prokop Klyuchka and Vassili Gorlenko, the author portrays keen, vital people unremitting in their strivings to attain the good things of life.

But there are other characters, too, in the play. Take Sergeant Stepan Grusha, who has returned from the war wearing four decorations. He loves his Soviet homeland but upon his return to civil life, he feels lost. "First think what Dzvonkovoye was before," he says, "and what is it now? People living in huts. Everything destroyed. What a fine stable stood here! And now? A pile of wreckage! What splendid horses! And now, only these sorry-looking jades! It's the same wherever you turn. . . Things have come to such a pass, that rather than think of anything new we must thank God if in ten years' time we've got to where we were before the war. . . ."

Stepan is thinking of leaving the old village. He—a veteran sergeant, is not going to grow potatoes and be under petticoat government! But Prokop Klyuchka fires him with a dream of construction and Stepan's misgivings vanish into thin air.

To produce a play without a thrilling plot, with no outward dynamics of events, and where the dramatic suspense is merged in the conflict of minds and characters is no easy task. The theatre, however, has successfully achieved this.

Galinsky has created an attractive image as the leading figure in the collective farm village. Zagayevski gives a vivid portrait of Sergeant Grusha, revealing the turmoil in the mind of a man who, having lost his bearings and scared at the difficulties of rehabilitation, seeks a quiet haven and easy earnings.

Datzenko in the role of Marina Gordienko, President of the collective farm, depicts a strong-willed woman with a dominating personality yet human and tender-hearted.

The play was warmly received by a public who found in *Come to Dzvonkovoye* answers to numerous perturbing questions.

Costumes for The Snow Maiden. *By V. Polenov*

THE BAKHRUSHIN THEATRICAL MUSEUM

Very popular among Soviet theatrical people is the State Theatrical Museum housed in an old mansion in Moscow. Connoisseurs of theatrical matters, producers, actors, artists and students find within its walls abundant and valuable material on all questions of stagecraft. The rare objects collected by careful and loving hands reveal pages from the history of the Russian theatre. The Museum bears the name of its founder, Alexei Bakhrushin, connoisseur and theatre-lover, who half a century ago began collecting various objects connected with the stage. After the Revolution, Bakhrushin presented the Museum to the State, he himself remaining in charge until his death.

After the four-year interval occasioned by the war, the Museum has now reopened its doors to the public. The exhibits number over forty thousand photographs of actors, original sketches and photographs of several thousands of productions; old play-bills and programmes of the earliest Russian performances. The museum's treasures include some of the personal belongings of the great actor Mikhail Shchepkin, of Alexander Ostrovsky, the playwright, and the identical stage costumes worn by Chaliapin.

The opening of the museum coincided with an exhibition of *The Masters of Russian Stage Décor*, held within its halls. Among the exhibits are sketches of scenery and costumes by L. Bakst, A. Benoit, I. Bilibin, A. Vasnetsov, M. Vroubel, A. Golovin, M. Dobuzhinsky, C. Korovin, B. Kustodyev, V. Serov, K. Somov, E. Lanceret, F. Fyodorovsky, C. Yuon and other masters of stage décor of the 19th and 20th centuries.

A NEW THEATRE IN TASHKENT

In Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, the building of a new House of Opera and Ballet designed by Academician A. Shchusev, is nearing completion. The new building while reproducing traits peculiar to the Uzbek style, is at the same time a splendid specimen of modern architecture. Simple and maestic in conception, the theatre is faced with local bricks ornamented with blue-tinted marble. The main facade will be decorated with light-blue Uzbek tiles. The lower plinth will be covered with rose-tinted granite. In the evening four open-work Oriental turrets illuminated from within will shed their glow on the main entrance.

The interior will be stuccoed in alabaster after the style of the ancient edifices of Samarkand and Khiva, the alabaster bearing carved designs. The dominant tone of the interior decorations will be a deep ivory.

For a medieval town. E. Lanceret

Set for the opera Tale of the Golden Cockerel. *By I. Bilibin*

The auditorium, calculated to seat fifteen hundred, will consist of stalls, amphitheatre and two balconies. The eight hundred seats of the stalls will be upholstered in sapphire velvet.

The curtain of the same cloth embroidered in gold and silver is being made by expert Bukhara embroiderers.

SHAKESPEARE ON THE AZERBAIJAN STAGE

Nakhichevan, a large town in Azerbaijan, contains one of the oldest native theatres. Here, sixty years ago, a local amateur circle staged its first performance, a comedy by Akhundov, an Azerbaijan playwright. In recent years, this group of amateurs formed the nucleus of the Nakhichevan State Theatre.

A revival of *Othello* translated into Azerbaijan by J. Jhabardy, deservedly ranks among the theatre's successes. The young actors, I. Musayev and Z. Gamzayeva, both trained at the Azerbaijan theatrical school, have been entrusted with the roles of Othello and Desdemona. This is the second Shakespeare play staged by the Nakhichevan playhouse. The first was *Hamlet*.

MUSIC

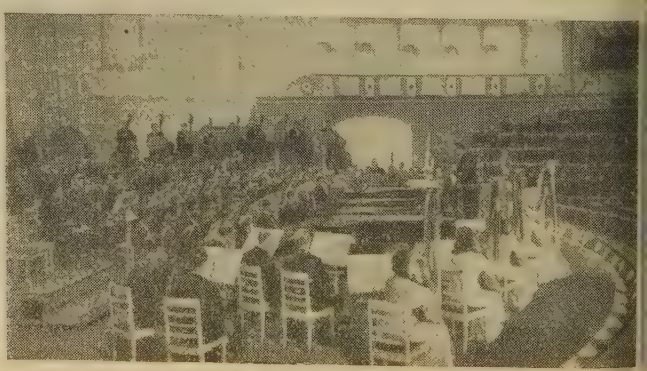
ODE ON THE TERMINATION OF THE WAR

Recent works by Sergei Prokofyev are permeated with the theme of great national trials and the national spirit—the theme of war. This same theme found expression in the cantata composed for the famous film *Alexander Nevsky*, in the realistic scenes of the opera *Semyon Kotko*; in the mass episodes of *War and Peace*, Prokofyev's last opera; in the austerely epic pages of his 7th and 8th sonatas, and in the *Ballad About a Boy*. His 5th Symphony, written in the summer of 1944, was inspired with the anticipation of impending victory.

And now comes the finale of this singular war epic—an original and vivid symphonic picture, the *Ode on the Termination of the War*, written in the summer of 1945 (Opus 105). Dispensing with choral effects, the composer has entrusted his symphony to an unusual orchestral ensemble: a strengthened wind instruments section (including saxophones), four pianos, eight harps, twice the usual number of double-basses, a complicated set of percussion instruments (including solo bells), and a complete absence of violins, violas and violoncellos.

A grandiose volume of sound envelopes you with the first opening bars. The immensity of the epic events finds due expression in the hyperbolism of the musical images. The roll of the piano *glissandos* recalls the boom of breakers crashing against a sea-wall. And with it all, the free and melodic theme entoned by the French horns, suggested in the opening bars, heralds the approach of other musical images, more tuneful, ardent, and emotional. The melody following the introduction is sensed as a symbol of a people's might, of an ardour, gay and irrepressible. The melodious structure of the Russian folk song is combined with a rhythmical clear cut and continuous movement.

The middle episode of the *Ode* comes as an unexpected contrast. The voices of the great instrumental chorus are hushed. There remain only delicate pastel shades; soft rippling of harps and tuneful chords on the wood instruments. . . .



Orchestra performing Prokofyev's Ode

And once more the boundless song breaks ut. The author has called this a *Theme of he Awakening of Joy*. In the clearly-delineat-d melody the charm of Russian lyrical song ningles with poignant modern music.

The lyrical middle episode, again accompan-ed by the vigorous theme, leads up to the Finale of the *Ode*. "I should have called this, *Ring the Bells and Sound the Cymbals*," Pro-kofyev himself says. As the climax is reached, he music rings and surges like molten lava.

Prokofyev's new work is the subject of ieated argument in Moscow music circles. Some critics are delighted while others re-proach the composer for his deliberate renun-ciation of a complex symphonic development, or mechanical piecing together of musical ragments. But Prokofyev does not seem to iave aimed at a complex symphonic structure. His composition is a festive musical "*pan-ieau*", captivating in its originality and prilliance, in its freedom of construction and oy of life.

NEW MUSICAL PUBLICATIONS

The State Music Publishing House has is-ued several new works by Soviet composers nd several works of classical literature set o vocal and instrumental music.

Among the new publications are the scores f Nikolai Myaskovsky's *12th Symphony* and *th Quartet*, a *Sonata for Violoncello* by the ame author and Dmitri Shostakovich's *Trio*. The Uzbek composer's—M. Ashrafi's—*eroic Symphony*, which won a Stalin Prize, as also been published.

The Classical Russian Music Series is en-iched by a number of songs by Mikhail linka, Alexander Glazunov, Chaikovsky nd Rachmaninov (including the latter's *ocalise*, dedicated to the singer Antonina ezhdanova). There are also new editions of rias and scenes from *Ivan Sussanin*, *Prince gor*, *Khovanshchina* and *Askold Grave*.

Among the educational publications are haikovsky's *Child Album*, Helena Gnie-na's *Pianoforte Alphabet*, Dmitri Kaba-evsky's *Pieces for Children*, and selections r the junior classes of music schools.

The latest addition to the *Classics of Rus-an Music* book series is a monograph by . Alexeyev, devoted to Anton Rubinstein, mposer, pianist and conductor.

TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY PURCELL

The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary the death of the great English composer, enry Purcell was commemorated in Soviet usic circles by several memorial functions.

A Purcell meeting was held at VOKS—e U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations ith Foreign Countries. Vissarion Shebalin, irector of the Moscow Conservatory, pre-ied at the meeting. Reinhold Glière, the nerable Soviet composer and President of e Association of Soviet Composers, who elt on Purcell's contribution to British usical culture made the point that Pur-l's music had always found high appre-tion with Russian composers. The meeting ich was attended by Mr. Roberts, coun-lor to the British Embassy in Moscow, composers, artists and representatives of the press, was followed by a concert of Purcell's compositions.

Another meeting dedicated to the English composer was held by the Musical Theatre Circle attached to the All-Russian Theatrical Society. After a lecture by Professor Igor Boelza, the audience heard a gramophone recording of Purcell's opera, *Dido and Aeneas*.

In the symphonic rendering on concert platforms this opera always enjoys success with the Soviet public. It has been repeatedly performed by one of the capital's outstanding amateur ensembles—an orchestra and choir composed of members of the Scientists' Club. The ensemble is conducted by Victor Sadovnikov and the professors, lecturers and post-graduates of this ensemble bring a delicate ear and strong feeling for style to their performances of Purcell's opera.

IAN SIBELIUS' EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

The 5th Symphony, the tone-poem *Finlandia*, *Valse Triste*, and several songs were performed at a concert held in Moscow to honour the eightieth birthday of the outstanding Finnish composer, Ian Sibelius. Vassili Nebolsin conducted the State Symphonic Orchestra and Natalia Shpiller of the Bolshoi Theatre was the soloist. The concert was given to a large audience gathered in the Chaikovsky Hall, one of Moscow's largest concert auditoriums. Among the audience were the members of the Finnish Mission headed by the Minister, Mr. Sundstrem, members of the diplomatic corps, people prominent in the art world, generals and officers of the Red Army, Soviet and foreign journalists.

The concert was preceded by an address by Dmitri Kabalevsky, who has recently visited Finland. Kabalevsky has also contributed an interesting account of his meeting with Sibelius in the pages of *Sovietskoye Iskusstvo* ("Soviet Art"), a weekly.

CINEMA

NEW FILMS

On the Soviet screens side by side with the names of the masters Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, Pudovkin, Ermler and Gerassimov, those masters of the Russian cinema, more and more frequently appear the names of producers, actors, scenario-writers and cameramen from the national republics. A number of releases by Ukrainian and Georgian studios have already won fame and recently three new films—Azerbaijan, Uzbek and Kazakh, have appeared on the screens.

Arshin-Mal-Alan, the Azerbaijan film, is an experiment in screening Uzeir Gadzhibekov's musical comedy, an old favourite that for the last thirty years has continually been seen on the stages of the Transcaucasus. It has been translated into the Russian, Georgian and Armenian languages.

We are shown the life and customs of pre-revolutionary Azerbaijan with the age-old traditions demanding among other things that the bride and bridegroom shall not see

Still from the film
Arshin-Mal-Alan

one another before the wedding day. The young Asker and lovely Gioulchokhra, a bride and bridegroom who have not yet made each other's acquaintance, have vowed to break the time-honoured custom of their ancestors and refuse their consent to a marriage "in the dark". Disguised as a peddler, Asker makes his way into the house of his betrothed and . . . falls in love with her at first sight. But he does not betray his identity. He wants to put the girl's heart to the test. The fair Gioulchokhra also loses her heart to the poor peddler and in despair, having no inkling of his being her intended husband, she decides to end her life. The friends and relations of the lovers have quite a busy time unravelling this exciting situation.

In transferring Gadzhibekov's comedy to the screen, script-writer Sabit Rakhmanov, and directors Rza Takhmasib and Nikolai Lezhchenko have considerably enlarged the original action. A number of vivid nature and genre scenes have been introduced: a noisy Eastern Bazaar, picturesque Azerbaijan scenery, the narrow streets of an old Eastern town, shady parks with pools and light filigreed bowers. In Gadzhibekov's music, the native folk melodies are harmoniously blended with the skill and style of European music.

Rashid Beibutov, the Azerbaijan singer-actor, in the leading role, has all the qualities of presence and voice to make a splendid Asker. The young actress, Leila Djhavan is fascinating as the beautiful Gioulchokhra. Among other well-known native artists in the film are Ismail Effendiev, Diondfelli Abdullayev, Mirza Aga Aliev and Fatima Mikhralieva. The scenes were shot by operators Ali Satar Atakshiev and Mukhtar Dadashev.

In Uzbek folklore the names of Takhir and Zukhra have come to symbolize eternal love. They have their counterparts in European literature in the images of Romeo and Juliet, or Tristan and Isolt.

The Uzbek film *Takhir and Zukhra* is based on the play of that name by Sabir Abdulla who has woven into his story the old-time native legends.

The ruling Khan Bobokhan is blessed with the birth of a daughter, Zukhra. The happy father proposes that any child born on the same day as Zukhra should be brought to the palace. The warrior Baghir, brings his newly born son named Takhir. The Khan vows that this boy and his daughter shall become man and wife.

The children grow up together in the palace. When they are twelve years old an event of great importance occurs in the country. The leader of the common people, Sardar, "The Emir of the Poor," as he is called, is captured by the Khan's warriors. As he is being led to execution, Baghir contrives to elude the vigilance of the guard and save his old friend, Sardar, from death. The infuriated Bobokhan kills Baghir, but keeps the deed a secret lest Takhir, his future son-in-law, should discover the name of his father's murderer.

The secret, however, becomes known to Takhir when he reaches the age of eighteen. He resolves to flee to Sardar and avenge his father's death. But his plans are discovered, the youth is caught and by order of Bobokhan is thrown into the river in a box which is securely locked. Zukhra who loves Takhir is inconsolable. When Bobokhan compels his daughter to marry one of his courtiers, Zukhra is desperate. She remains faithful to Takhir.

Takhir is alive. The box in which he was confined is fished out of the river by the servants of a Khoresmian Princess. She offers her love and her kingdom to Takhir but the youth is faithful to Zukhra. On the day appointed for Zukhra's wedding the resourceful Takhir penetrates into the palace. He kills his rival in a duel whereupon Bobokhan, seeing that his hopes are shattered, in a frenzy of blind rage kills his daughter. Takhir in despair pierces his breast with a sword. The lovers are united in death.

This pathetic Oriental story has been transferred to the screen. The authors of the scenario, Sabir Abdulla and Alexei Speshnev have successfully combined the poetry of the ancient narrative with the tenseness of the dramatic action. The young actors Yuldus Rizaev (Zukhra) and Guliash Aglayev (Takhir) are eminently successful as the hero and

till from the film
ngs of Abai

eroine, any lack of mastery being atoned
r by beauty, charm and freshness of emo-
on. They were both trained at the Tash-
nt Studio, and both make their debut in
ikhir and Zukhra.

The director, Nabi Ganiev, has displayed
delicate artistic discrimination in his
aging of the film. Successfully avoiding the
tfalls of operatic conventionality and
eudo-Oriental exotics he has sustained
roughout the atmosphere of this stirring
gend.

Songs of Abai, a film released by the
lma-Ata studio, is dedicated to Abai Ku-
nbayev, a popular hero of the Kazakh
ople.

The romantic image of Abai, the noble
vocate of enlightenment who waged a
liant struggle striving to bring his coun-
ymen within the reach of progressive cul-
re, has been effectively reproduced on the
reen. The every-day life and customs of
e country are shown with convincing real-
n.

The principal role was entrusted to
. Kuanyshpayev, the popular Kazakh
tor.

ARTS

THE LANDSCAPES OF EVGENI KUDRYAVTSEV

"We had no previous knowledge of this painter," say critics and art connoisseurs when speaking of Kudryavtsev. But in the museums of the capital he has long been known as an experienced restorer and expert on problems of storing museum pieces. And yet he is a man well past his youth and has been a painter now for many years. Modestly and assiduously he has worked in his studio rarely showing his canvases to anyone; but now that he has exhibited them it is obvious that any future pictures of his will excite the liveliest interest in artistic circles.

The exhibition includes landscapes, pictures and a considerable number of sketches, executed between 1937 and 1945. The appeal of Kudryavtsev's paintings lies in their robust life, their sincerity and spontaneous understanding of nature. Specially noticeable among the earlier sketches are some lyrical landscapes of Central Russia, such as "The Pathway" and "The Volga." In "New York Docks" the peculiar nature of the archi-

Rosy Day in Siberia.
By Evgeni Kudryavtsev

Peterhof Park. The fountains before Mon-Plaisir. By S. Shchedrin

tectural pattern of this city has been cleverly noted. A series of sketches of the Caucasian mountains show excellent discrimination.

But it was not till 1941, when Kudryavtsev visited Siberia that he fully realized his powers. He was irresistibly drawn to the rugged and austere Siberian scenery. His studies of Novosibirsk in winter linger in memory. They form an entire image of the town—the sum total of close and subtle observation. Kudryavtsev is particularly good in his treatment of frost, with a vivid red sun peering through a curtain of bluish mist and light columns of smoke from the chimneys rising over the town. These sketches of frosty days were painted by the artist in a small heated waggon constructed by himself and hand-drawn as he travelled hither and thither on his skis.

The exhibition proves Kudryavtsev to be a talented follower of the best traditions of Russian landscape painting.

THE FIRST RUSSIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTER

Two hundred years have passed since the birth of Sylvester Shchedrin (1745-1804), one of the founders of the Russian school of landscape painting.

Landscape painting in Russia first appeared in the sketches of artists who painted theatrical scenery and craftsmen who made architectural and topographical pictures of towns, palaces and parks. Shchedrin was the first to depict definite localities. He strove for picturesque unity between nature and architecture. He has left pictures of beauty spots in the vicinity of Petersburg—glimpses of Pavlovsk and Gatchina with their quiet ponds, sparkling fountains and latticed bowers. His landscapes are enlivened with figures of men and women strolling amidst the delightful scenery. The canvases are sustained in dignified colour-schemes with blues and browns predominating.

The son of a soldier in the Preobrazhensky Life Guards Regiment, Shchedrin graduated from the Petersburg Art Academy with a gold medal in 1767, and was sent abroad to complete his education. He worked in the studios of the foremost painters in France and Italy.

Prominent among his paintings are a number of monumental decorative works—murals and panneaux executed for the Mikhailovsky Palace and other buildings in Petersburg.

Shchedrin was also a talented teacher who trained many Russian landscape painters. To him belongs the credit of founding in the Petersburg Art Academy the first classes for landscape-engraving in Russia.

A commemoration meeting in honour of Shchedrin was held at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, and pictures from his brush are on view in the halls of the Gallery.

MISCELLANEOUS

HERE LIVED LEO TOLSTOY

In Yassnaya Polyana, Tolstoy's estate near Tula, everything connected with the life of its famous owner has been carefully preserved.

. . . A Norton clock peacefully ticks away. In the dining room the long narrow table is laid for dinner. The cup of the master of the house is chipped at the edges, the large bread-platter bears innumerable marks from the blunt knife lying beside it. The arms of a tall Voltaire easy chair standing by the piano are slightly frayed. In the study, too, everything is just as it was in the owner's lifetime; the table at which *Khadzhi-Murat*, *After the Ball*, *The Forged Banknote* came into being. . . Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* lies open at page 144 . . . it was the last book Tolstoy held in his hands. A low armchair . . . Tolstoy always sat erect, unbending. Books everywhere. A kingdom of books. Fortunately those books were saved from destruction at the hands of the Germans. They burnt the bookshelf made with Tolstoy's own hands, but the twenty-three thousand volumes composing the Tolstoy's library, survived. Fourteen thousand of these volumes bear on their pages notes and inscriptions made by the great writer.

The bedroom. A wide-brimmed hat hanging on a stand. A walking-stick. The Indian clubs Tolstoy used to the last days of his life. An old-fashioned sewing-machine on which his wife used to make his simple working blouses. Pictures from the past rise before the visitor's eyes. Sergei Taneyev at the piano; Ilya Repin at the easel intent on Tolstoy's portrait; Turgenev reading his latest novel. Tolstoy deep in conversation with Chekhov, Gorky, Korolenko. . . .

A charred piece of wood—this lintel from the door of Tolstoy's library and a list of objects carried off from the Museum by the Germans is, perhaps, all that is left to remind us of the black days of the German occupation.

CHARLES DICKENS OVER THE ETHER

Day by day the Soviet radio relays the best works of Russian and world literature. Four broadcasts are given daily for children of different ages, Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, Jerome K. Jerome, Oscar Wilde, Conan Doyle occupying a prominent place on the programmes. Among the latest novelties in these broadcasts are arrangements of *David Copperfield* and the *Pickwick Papers*. The former includes episodes from David's childhood years until he finds his aunt in her old-fashioned house in Dover. The *Pickwick Papers* forms a cycle of six broadcasts acquainting the young listeners with the amusing adventures of Mr. Pickwick and his friends. From the long list of Sir Walter Scott's books, *Quentin Durward* with his honest, frank and fearless hero, has been chosen for transmission. This radio-composition falls into two series and is accompanied by English songs and melodies.

Conan Doyle's *Blue Carbuncle* is a great favourite. A very jolly broadcast is Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*. Maria Babanova in the leading role lends a new charm to Oscar Wilde's poetical tale, *The Star Boy*.

In this manner the Soviet radio transmits selected works of English literature to millions of listeners.

IN MEMORY OF MARK TWAIN

One of the most popular of American writers in the U.S.S.R. is Mark Twain, a favourite with adults and children alike. *The Prince and the Pauper*, adapted for the stage by the poet Sergei Mikhalkov, ran for several years at Moscow's Central Children's Theatre. A *Tom Sawyer* adaptation enjoyed equal success. Our best monologists include many of Mark Twain's stories in their performances.

The hundred-and-tenth anniversary of the great American writer's birth was fittingly marked in Moscow literary circles.

An evening dedicated to the memory of Mark Twain was held at the V.O.K.S., the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries. Addresses were given on Mark Twain's life and writings by the Soviet writers Samuel Marshak, Lev Kassil, David Zaslavsky, Vassili Lebedev-Koumach, Kornei Chukovsky, and also by the U.S.A. Ambassador to U.S.S.R., Mr. A. Harriman, and the President of V.O.K.S. Vladimir Kemenov. A concert composed of the works of Mark Twain followed, in which several well-known artists, among them Ossip Abdoulov and Emmanuel Kaminka took part. The evening was a great success.

IN SOBINOV'S HOME

A flat on the fourth floor, with a brass plate on the door bearing the name of L. V. Sobinov. . . It was here that the eminent Russian singer spent the last thirteen years of his life.

Here everything is linked with his name; everything speaks of the man's culture. This is his study where the youth visited him with their dreams of appearing on the operatic stage. Nezhdanova often sang in this room. Writers, artists, painters were frequent visitors. Rehearsals, too, of the Stanislavsky Opera House where Sobinov taught in the latter years of his life frequently took place in this apartment.

On the walls of the study are canvases by Vasnetsov, Krymov, Petrov-Vodkin, Korovin, Balianitsky-Biriulia. A great friendship existed between L. Sobinov and the painter Korovin. The singer's portrait preserved in his study was painted by Korovin in 1917.

Here stands a handsome grand piano of dark cherry colour, presented to Sobinov in 1912 by a group of his admirers. S. Rachmaninov chose it himself and often played on it afterwards. Many years of Sobinov's life are bound up with Rachmaninov's name. Here lies a short note in the singer's handwriting and dated June 1905: "A thousand times I repeat: Rachmaninov is our only hope in the sphere of music."

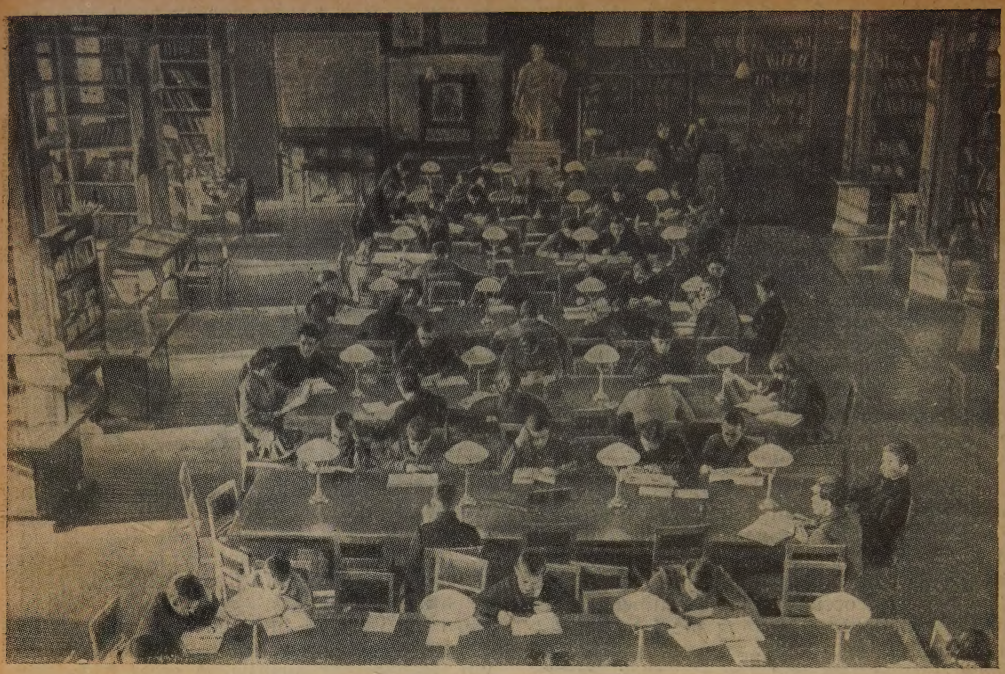
Here are the scores from which the singer practised his parts. He sang forty-two roles in all. The texts in the scores are printed in Italian and in Russian. But these texts are crossed out and new words are written in their stead in Sobinov's hand. He always composed his own texts to the parts he sang.

In a small cabinet of Karelian birch is preserved a death mask of the singer made at Riga by the Latvian sculptor Dzenis.

A READING-ROOM FOR CHILDREN

From 9 a. m. daily, children of secondary, trade and technical schools, from the lower to the upper classes may be seen making their way to the Lenin Public Library in Moscow.

The first large hall is adapted to the needs of scholars from the 5th class upwards. On the walls are portraits of writers and such geographical maps as needed by the children in their studies. The staff know their regular readers, help them in their work and direct their reading. On view in the stands are the newest books arranged according to theme and author. Besides the catalogues, bibliographical leaflets are periodically issued dealing with such questions as what to read about the Great Patriotic War, about Lenin, about Soviet youth, etc. There are literary



Reading room for older children at the State Lenin Library

evenings sponsored by the library, meetings with authors, all kinds of lectures and talks for the young people. Among the writers who have visited the children's halls are the popular author for juveniles, Lev Kassil, Prilezhayeva, the authoress of the attractive story *Seventh Form Girls*, and a group of writers who are working in the field of scientific fiction.

The writers read excerpts from their works and their young readers voice their opinions on the books they have read and express their wishes for the future.

The younger children have their own hall suitably furnished. There's a large bright-looking calendar, with coloured pictures; an exhibition of new books in attractive covers and a splendid wall-newspaper. A special catalogue, too, is available for the youngsters. They often forget the names of the authors and may even mix up the titles of the books they want. Their needs are met by a catalogue consisting of book-covers. Children possessing a good visual memory immediately recognize old friends whom they are eager to meet again.

The bibliographical reference department dealing with children's enquiries is an important item in the life of the library. "It is my main task," says the librarian in charge, "to help the children find the book most necessary and interesting for them in each case—the most comprehensible and best suited to their needs. We try to help them form habits of working with books by themselves, to teach them how to select books on different subjects, how to use a dictionary, a book of reference or a catalogue."

The children's reading-room was opened in 1942. By 1943 the number of visitors had reached 8,000, in 1944 it was 11,000 and in 1945—12,000. The young people are very active. Besides their reading, they attend various circles and issue a wall-newspaper. They run an interesting album entitled *My Favourite Book*, in which they write accounts of books they enjoyed reading and illustrate their remarks.

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